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HIGHLAND
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THE
HIGHLAND INN.



COIR NAN URISKIN.

VOL. II.

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THE HIGHLAND INN,

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CHAPTER I.

“ ——— What see you there.

That hath so cowarded and chased your blood

Out of appearance ?”

HENRY THE FIFTH.

As Donald had foretold, we were much disappointed in the Coir nan Uriskén ; indeed, there was nothing sufficiently attractive in its aspect, from the water, to induce us to leave the boat. Time, also, like a silent river, had flowed on so imperceptibly, that we were warned by the deepening shadows, which the downward sun was beginning to throw over the hollows on the face of Ben Venue, that it was time to think of returning to the Inn ; we, therefore, crossed to the opposite side of the lake, and landed in the little cove, into which Donald, with the gravity of a veritable chronicler, assured us the Lady of the Lake was wont to push her skiff.

The second mysterious appearance of the vision, for I could scarcely believe it any thing else, of the individual the least likely to be in this part of the world, awakened in my mind a train of unaccountable imaginings which I could not suppress. The effect, however, which the same optical delusion, or something else very closely resembling it, had apparently produced on Caroline Ashton and Mr. Mordaunt puzzled me: it was an enigma which I longed to solve, by questioning either of the parties respecting what they had observed. It had altered their countenances and changed their demeanour in a remarkable degree. The vivacity of Miss Ashton had completely vanished; she appeared thoughtful and alarmed; and, the moment that we landed, she clung to the arm of the Veteran, as if she sought his protection against some impending evil. Looks, also, which spoke important communications, were exchanged between Caroline and her cousin, who requested me to give Miss Ashton my arm, so that she was supported by the Veteran and myself, whilst Miss Standard hung on the other arm of her father. Mr. Mordaunt seemed purposely to have fallen into the rear, with the Cantab and Mr. Sketchly; although it was very evident that he was aware of the cause of Miss Ashton's

perturbation. Yet his gait, his silence, and his look, indicated that some serious reflections were passing in his mind, connected with the extraordinary incident which had so lately occurred. But great as my anxiety was to understand the meaning of these obvious impressions, caused by an apparent spectral illusion on at least three of the party, the present was not the moment for obtaining an elucidation of the mystery ; and, therefore, I suffered my thoughts to take an excursive range in framing a solution, which, afterwards, turned out to be wholly incorrect.

How curious it is, often, to contemplate the workings of imagination on subjects devoid of the foundation of experience, and which, indeed, seems altogether baseless. And yet, even when conscious of their nothingness, how deeply do we permit them to impress the mind. A temporary belief in preternatural agency may arise, and, like every thing else which circumstances have aided in strongly occupying attention, may affect the feelings, and awaken ideas which tinge the whole train of our reflections. I could not seriously assent to the doctrines of second-sight, although they had been familiar to me from my earliest infancy ; yet what I had witnessed almost made me a convert. But still

this question arose—were this appearance a mere delusion, why should others be, apparently, as much influenced by it as myself? I determined to have the mystery resolved the first opportunity which presented itself of speaking to the Veteran on the subject.

In consequence of the state of Miss Ashton's feelings, and those of Mr. Mordaunt, which were still more inexplicable, our walk up the Trosachs would have been a silent one, had not an incident occurred to disturb the train of thought in all of us. It was one of those occurrences which possess little of interest in themselves; but which are so strongly tinged with the ludicrous, that the mind, even in the most serious mode of its reflections, can scarcely avoid relaxing and feeling its influence.

Our band had just entered the Trosachs, when we encountered a party coming down, followed by a handsome barouche and a tilbury. It consisted of two gentlemen and four ladies. The younger portion of the bipeds, forming what the Veteran called the avant guard, was composed of two pert young misses, frightfully drawn in at the waist and fashionably overdressed, leaning upon the arm of a young man, the very pink of dandyism. I fancied that the faces of the

damsels were familiar to me ; but they were too much engaged with their companion, who seemed to pay an equal tribute to the wit of both, to look up ; indeed, the loudness of their conversation, and the gusts of laughter in which they indulged, showed that they were in the best humour with themselves and with one another, and far too deeply engrossed in the subject of their mirth to notice either persons or the scenery around them. In vain the birches on the face of Binean displayed their silvery stems and azure leaves ; in vain the trailing eglantine threw its green and rosy veil over the face of the rocks ; the budding brake, the flowering broom, the fern, the wooded knolls, cushioned with manifold coloured mosses and purple heath, the loch, and the mountain, were alike unnoticed ; and equally unheard the trill of the rock linnet, and the mellow song of the mavis, who now poured forth his lengthened notes from the nested foliage.

The other division of the party, which we had time to reconnoitre, consisted of a squat, or rather dumpy, round-faced, consequential little man, dressed in a green frock coat, white trousers, and a hat with an unusual breadth of brim ; a lady of a similar calibre, richly attired, but without the smallest attempt at elegance,

who screened a broad, red, shrewish face from the sun with a white silk parasol; and a tall, slender, sharp-faced, sarcastic looking female, evidently, from the plainness of her dress, some dependent or humble friend: a footman, in a handsome livery, with a gold-headed cane, which would have been in place in Grosvenor Square, followed at a respectful distance.

As we approached the last group, my astonishment was excited in recognizing, in this trio, the father and mother of my brother officer and worthy friend Wetherell, and his maiden aunt, Miss Mary Stapleton, his mother's sister.

Miss Standard was remarking, in a whisper, on the stately strut of the little man and his companion, when he suddenly stopped, shook off his womenkind, and, advancing towards me, put out his hand, and exclaimed, "Dr. Mc Alpin, or I am much mistaken?" and, without waiting for a reply, continued, "how happy I am to see you; who would have thought of meeting you in this wild place?"

"I was about to make the same remark, Mr. Wetherell," said I, shaking the little man by the hand, and bowing to the ladies, who now came up; "I did not expect to meet you so far from the Exchange."

“ True, Doctor ! true—a fool’s errand—dragged here by my daughters to see an island and a cave—could have gone to the Isle of Wight for half the money—know nothing about the cave—I dare say the Thames tunnel is a better thing—but women will have their way. Did you not speak to the girls ? Ho ! ho ! Kitty.”

Kitty was beyond hearing ; and Mrs. Wetherell pronounced nothing to be so vulgar as bawling after people.

“ Well, well, my dear ! suppose it will soon be vulgar to eat or sleep. Snubbed more than ever, Doctor ! since we got to Russell Square.”

Mrs. Wetherell tossed up her head ; “ Dr. Mc Alpin,” said she, in the most pompous and measured strain, “ you must excuse Mr. Wetherell ; nothing will ever alter his manners.”

I assured her I saw nothing to excuse.

“ That’s right, Doctor ! that’s right !” replied the little man, “ manners ! eh—humbug !”

Fearful of what might result, were this sparring to proceed farther, I enquired after my friend Captain Wetherell.

“ Tom ! i’ faith—you may ask his sisters—never hear from him unless he wants money—believe he is in Paris—no fighting now, Doctor ! By the bye,” continued he, “ did you notice that

young fellow with the girls ? it's young Laurel, the Deputy's son—a clever young man—was bred up at Oxford for the church, but preferred the counting house—a wise man ! one desk for another—eh ! Doctor—he ! he ! he !”

I was about to reply, when he interrupted me.

“ You see he is courting Kitty—so he came with us—the Deputy is a most substantial man—I would take his acceptance for a hundred thousand pounds as soon as a bank note—believe he will tell down pretty freely—I can give Kitty something, you know, Doctor—he ! he ! he !”

Here Mrs. Wetherell again broke out. “ I am really amazed, Mr. Wetherell, that you can expose your daughter's affairs in this way.”

“ Me expose ! what do you mean, my dear ? me expose ! do you call it exposing, because I tell my good friend, the Doctor, that the girl is going to be well married ? dem it ! I shall soon not be allowed to speak at all.”

I attempted to change the conversation, and asked whether he had brought any news from the metropolis.

“ Metropolis ! why it is a month since we left town—foolish thing to travel with one's own horses—much better to come in the mail—but

women will have their way. I have'nt seen a paper since I left town—stay ! there I am bouncing—I saw the paper in the Tontine at Glasgow—nice room that there news room. I told my clerk to send me the price current there ; and so I saw the room and read the papers.”

“ And what do you think of the Highlands, Madam ?” said I, addressing Mrs. Wetherell.

“ Think, Doctor ! how can you ask such a question ?” replied the little man before his wife could open her mouth ; “ women never think at all—if they did, they would not spend so much money on dress and nonsense—beg pardon, ma'am !” addressing himself to Miss Standard, who continued hanging on the arm of her father during this dialogue. Mrs. Wetherell, however, was not to be put down.

“ I beg,” said she, “ Mr. Wetherell, that you will speak on your own account. The Highlands—why, Sir, I think the inns very incommodious—that there one at Callander is the dirtiest I ever was in—no service at all. My two daughters aver that, if they had'nt brought their own maids, they could'nt 'ave surviv'd—and I can't tell what we should 'ave done without John.”

“ And the charges are most tremendous,”

said Miss Stapleton, curling up her sarcastic lip.

“ Hold your tongue, Mary Stapleton,” said her sister ; “ you are not to pay for the journey. Mr. Wetherell can very well afford the money ; and the girls ought to see the world.”

Miss Stapleton was mute.

“ You ask us about the Highlands, Doctor !” again chimed in Mr. Wetherell ; “ why, d’ye see, they are more than a hundred years behind us in improvements—great capabilities, but nobody to suggest. I would have had a paper-mill in this here valley :—water the clearest I ever saw :” casting his eye upon one of the limpid, little runnels, which crossed the road ; “ plenty of it for either undershot or overshot wheels : eh ! Doctor, eh !” Then looking down the glen, he suddenly exclaimed, “ Dem ! it ! the girls are out of sight—verily believe they have run off with Dick Laurel !—he ! he ! he ! Good bye, Doctor ! good bye—will be glad to see you in Russell Square—not so snug as the old place—good bye !—will be glad to see you.” And away this amiable pair strutted before I could reply.

The Veteran, who, during this conversation, had taken his umbrella from under his arm, his usual prelude to some remark, now broke forth—

“ By Gad ! Doctor ! that little man is con-

foundedly out of his reckoning in coming here ; yet, I like him better than his wife :—who and what are they ?”

“ Why, my dear Colonel,” replied I, “ he is a substantial citizen of London. Old Tom Wetherell, for he is so called although he has scarcely turned sixty, is a rich sugar-baker in Rotherhithe, where he resided, until his daughters returned home, at the termination of a very expensive school education. It is true, as you must have observed, that Old Wetherell has little scholastic lore himself, yet he has spared no expense in the education of his children. The Captain, his only son, my friend, is an accomplished gentleman ; but I fear that the girls have too much of the mother in them ever to acquire the manners and the real politeness of gentlewomen.

“ The idea of living on the sugar-baking premises was too shocking to be endured by the young ladies, who persuaded their father to take a house in Russell Square ; for he stoutly resisted all attempts to get him father West : and they succeeded also in persuading him to set up an equipage. Mrs. Wetherell, who was the daughter of a hatter, of the name of Stapleton, in the Borough, and who had assiduously aided her better half in accumulating

the ample fortune which he now possesses, had no objection to this change. The ambition of the good woman led her to aim at being as fashionable as Deputy Laurel's lady, who had left their neighbourhood to occupy a handsome mansion in Park Place, Regent's Park.

"The other lady of the trio is Miss Mary Stapleton, Mrs. Wetherell's sister; she was left with a very slender provision, owing to the failure of old Stapleton, a short time before his death. She is one of those sharp-faced spinsters, who, by making themselves useful in a thousand little ways in a family, are prized for their services by the heads of it, and equally detested by the younger branches for their obsequiousness; who bear quizzing as a spaniel stands beating, and who revenge themselves by carrying gossip from family to family, and setting people by the ears.

"How unlike dear Aunt Bridget," said Miss Standard, who had been greatly amused by the Wetherells. "With all her eccentricities, Aunt Bridget," continued she, "is full of gentle and sympathetic feelings: she is a child in simplicity; open, warm-hearted, and benevolent in all her thoughts and deeds."

"Yes, by Gad!" said the Veteran, "Biddy is, indeed, full of the milk of human kindness:

I never heard her utter an illnatured remark on any one. Her foible, good old soul! is vanity: and, like most old maids, she will not permit herself to see the wrinkles which time is daily indenting on her forehead. But, she is a general favorite, Doctor!—what say you Carry, my dear? Why, what is the matter? your vivacity has beaten a retreat:—you look as demure as a quaker.”

I was, indeed, astonished at the complete change in Miss Ashton's manner; she had courtesied politely to Mrs. Wetherell, when we stopped; but, from what I had observed of her quick perception of the ludicrous, and the felicitous manner in which she could render it perceptible to others, in description, I expected some pointed remarks from her on the absurdities of the Wetherells. She, however, continued silent: it was evident that something had gained full possession of her mind; I had no hesitation in ascribing it to the same circumstance which had so excited my astonishment; especially as it was coupled with the extraordinary and sudden cessation of Mr. Mordaunt's attentions. But why such a circumstance should occur, were Mr. Mordaunt aware of the individual who had shewn himself, if that individual were really flesh and blood, was inconceivable:

—that he must have had suspicions of another kind was clear. I had no doubt of the feelings of the clergyman towards Caroline Ashton ; but I was ignorant whether his sentiments were known, beyond mere conjecture, to the object of his affection. Turning the matter over in my mind, I recollected that Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, has quoted the following passage from Picolemineus : — “ Amiability is the object of love ; the scope and end is to obtain it, for whose sake we love, and which our mind covets to enjoy.” Now, if we add beauty to amiableness, and intelligence to both, and enrich one individual with the whole, we shall have an object truly capable of exciting, fixing, and exalting love : and such was Caroline Ashton. As the lover sees all these qualities in the idol at whose shrine he worships, Mr. Mordaunt no doubt had done so : yet, it is equally certain that your true lover is always prone to jealousy ; and this, thought I, may be the unfortunate state of poor Mordaunt. I longed for the moment to arrive when I should have the opportunity of speaking to Colonel Standard on the subject.

It was evident that Miss Standard was the only person aware of the true cause of her cousin’s feelings ; but, with the tact of a woman,

she instantly drew off the attention of her father, by turning to me, and remarking “ that nothing surprised her more, than that people should take so long a journey merely to say that they had been at the Trosachs, without receiving any real gratification from their visit.”

“ The Miss Wetherells, I suppose,” replied I, “ have been reading Sir Walter Scott’s poem of the Lady of the Lake, and have filled their imaginations with the scene of its adventures.”

“ But you must admit,” said she, “ that before the resolution to undertake so long a journey for such an object can be formed, the imagination must be powerfully impressed by the perusal of the poem : you must also admit that such a circumstance implies a certain degree of sensibility and refined taste in the persons who can be so impressed ; and, if you allow that the Miss Wetherells possess these qualities, surely it is reasonable to suppose that the striking scenery in this romantic glen, so full of beauty and sublimity, is sufficient to rouse the sympathies of our common nature, and to fill the mind with pleasure : yet those people appear neither to see nor to feel them.”

I was pleased with the justice of these remarks ; yet I ventured to argue the point a little with my accomplished companion ; and,

therefore, replied that I should have no difficulty in proving my position.

“ I can readily suppose,” continued Miss Standard, “ that the parents are dragged into the expedition to humour their children ; but that such lively and animated young persons as the daughters appear to be, should pass without observing such objects as now surround them, is indeed to me extraordinary.”

“ So far we are agreed,” said I, “ in imagining that the parents are passive agents : now, with respect to the young ladies themselves, their perusal of the *Lady of the Lake* has pictured in their minds two objects, which have been much talked of, and are believed by many to exist as they are described : their curiosity to see these is awakened, and it is sufficient to induce them to undertake the journey, and to drag their parents into the scheme : then why, you demand, does not this curiosity also interest them in the numerous other objects so capable of exciting it, which every where present themselves ? I reply, that a more powerful principle than curiosity influences their general feelings and actions ; I mean habit. It is this power which has deadened the parents to every thing not connected with business and the city ; and it is the same principle, although less fixed,

operating through the town-education of these young people, whose minds are so occupied with artificial objects, dress, parties, concerts, the theatre and the opera, that they have become completely sophisticated, and have imagined a world of their own, which renders them indifferent to that which is real. I have no doubt the conversation in which they seemed so deeply engrossed related to some party."

"But you have admitted, said Miss Standard, "that the curiosity of these young ladies may be awakened by the description of natural objects; why, then, is it not by the sight of them?"

"Your remark is correct," replied I; "but we must recollect that a spirited verbal description, besides raising ideas in the mind which perhaps are more pleasing from being obscure, is also calculated to produce a stronger emotion than the sight of the objects which it paints. The pleasure, derived from descriptive poetry, depends, in a great measure, on the ideas which it awakens in the mind of the reader; he makes the scenes his own creation; consequently, they are dearer and more interesting to him than the objects themselves, were they seen by him without his imagination having been previously excited.

“ I will illustrate my argument by a quotation from one of the most imaginative of our living bards* ; it is the description of a countenance such as you have often contemplated :—

‘ One face is pale
 In its own pensiveness, but paler seems
 Beneath the nun-like braidings of that hair
 So softly black, accordant with the calm
 Divine that on her melancholy brow
 Keeps deepening with her dreamst† !’

“ The prototype of this picture would not, generally, excite an emotion equal to the description ; and, yet, who can look upon such a face without being deeply affected ?”

Miss Standard gazed at me, for an instant, with an air of surprise—whilst a slight blush overspread her countenance.

“ The Miss Wetherells,” continued I, “ have thus formed their ideas of the place they have come here to see ; they are anxious to realize these ideas ; but, until the opportunity of doing so arrives, their thoughts are occupied with their usual pursuits, and they may be said to be blind to all other scenery, however well calculated to excite the most lively interest, and a high species of delight.”

* Wilson.

† Unimore. A Dream of the Highlands.

“ Perhaps,” rejoined Miss Standard, “ after all, their only object is to be able to boast in company of having seen places so much read and talked of.”

“ By Gad ! Letty,” said the Veteran, “ you have fired a point blank shot into the citadel ; the Doctor’s hypothesis, in my opinion, is at least a league distant from the truth.”

Conversing in this manner, we arrived at the Inn. Caroline Ashton, who had all along seemed absorbed in the reverie which had so suddenly overpowered her, the moment we reached the door, withdrew her arm from the Veteran’s, and hurried to her apartment, followed by Miss Standard. I lingered behind until Mr. Mordaunt came up : he, also, seemed anxious to escape from observation, and evidently was aware that his emotion had been noticed by me. He hurried into the inn, and did not again appear until dinner was announced. An apology was made by Miss Bridget for the absence of the other ladies.

“ Caroline,” said the good old maid, “ has a headache, which will be better in the evening : but she is, Mr. Mordaunt !” addressing herself to the clergyman, “ such a favorite of her aunt and cousin, that they cannot leave her. They will all, I hope, appear at tea.”

“What is the matter, Biddy?” said the Veteran, laying down the knife and fork which he had just used, in making the first incision in a leg of boiled mutton; “what is the matter?”

“Nothing of great importance, Augustus! you will know by and bye,” said Aunt Bridget, with a nod, and the most significant look.

“Surely, Carry has not again seen the scoundrel who annoyed her at Killin? By Gad! now I recollect that, when that movement took place among the bushes near the dell, where that singular being, who frightened Letitia, appeared and attracted the attention of us all, Carry became pale, and clung to my arm; but I saw nothing:—did you, Mr. Mordaunt?”

The Clergyman, whose attention was roused by the remark of the Veteran, replied that he had faintly seen the figure of a man glide among the bushes; and immediately afterwards Miss Ashton fainted. “Pray, Colonel! may I enquire what happened at Killin?”

“Why, my dear Sir! Caroline is a fearless person, and used frequently to stroll out alone, to sketch. One day, last week, when employed in this way, near the waterfall at Killin, a scoundrel stole behind her, and, raising her in his arms, would have carried her off, by Gad! if she had not been rescued by some

Highlanders who were passing at the time. The scoundrel escaped ; but, as he had been looking at her for some time, and had been observed by her, she said that she should always know him again."

This explanation seemed to clear the countenance of Mr. Mordaunt from the expression of anxiety which it previously wore ; it seemed as if a load had been removed from his mind. He cannot, then, thought I, have seen the apparition as it appeared to me. This supposition involved the whole affair in deeper mystery ; and my anxiety to unfold my doubts to the Veteran became increased, the more I reflected upon the subject.

The events of this day, and the absence of Caroline Ashton, whose vivacity and wit were the life of the whole party, threw a languor over the dinner table ; and the cloth was scarcely removed before each person betook himself to his peculiar occupations. The Veteran, even before his second tumbler was replenished, and his third cigar was half smoked out, reclined back on his chair and fell into a sound nap : the Cantab scarcely felt energy enough to spread between folds of blotting-paper the plants which he had collected in the morning ; and Mr. Sketchly, whilst humming

a tune, looked oftener at his sketches than he touched on them. Mr. Mordaunt had retired, and was traversing the little esplanade in front of the inn, with Miss Ashton hanging on his arm, and Mrs. Standard and her daughter and Aunt Bridget in close conversation after them ; so that the Advocate and myself, having nothing better to engage us, were seated in a kind of half-reverie, picturing figures in the embers of a peat fire, which now rendered the little room oppressively hot.

“What an odd circumstance,” said Mr. Oatlands, as he beheaded a turk with the point of the poker which he had thrust into the fire on commencing his remark : “what an odd circumstance that Miss Ashton should faint when that man passed through the thicket, as we left the dell to-day.”

“Did you see him” said I ; “what kind of a person was he ?”

“The view I obtained of him was very indistinct,” replied the Advocate ; “he seemed as if he was observing the party, and wishing to be concealed. But why Miss Ashton should faint because a man passed, I cannot comprehend.”

I was about to answer his remark, when the Colonel awoke with an audible yawn ; and, seeing the tea equipage upon the table, and the

hissing vase throwing up its curling clouds, as he stretched himself, asked "where are the womenkind?"

In a few minutes the ladies entered, with the exception of Caroline Ashton, who continued upon the esplanade with Mr. Mordaunt; but, soon afterwards, both made their appearance. Miss Ashton never looked more lovely; and her vivacity had returned with all its delightful accompaniments. After bestowing a smile, and a slight inclination of the head to each of the party, "Doctor! I fear," said she, as she shook me warmly by the hand, "you must have thought me very rude, or very ungrateful, in leaving you so abruptly this afternoon, and not thanking you for your attention when I was taken ill; be assured I truly felt your kindness, and I shall never forget it; nor that of Mr. Mordaunt."

A smile of encouragement, I observed, beamed upon her countenance as she turned to Mordaunt in speaking these words. He, indeed, seemed to require some comfort: he looked most unhappy, and displayed an inquietude and anxiety which ill accorded with the renewed vivacity and the sunny light of Miss Ashton's countenance. The evening still, however, passed heavily along: the ladies with-

drew from the group around the fire to confer with themselves.

It is on such occasions as that which now damped the spirits of us all that the value of female companionship is strongly felt. At all times, indeed, when ladies are absent, it must be admitted that conversation slackens and becomes less animated ; blanks are left in it which their presence fills up ; it is, in truth, feminine wit, not less than beauty and grace, which confers a charm on society that nothing else can supply. One of these long and dreary pauses had taken place, when the Veteran, turning suddenly round, addressed me : You had a noble army in Sicily, Doctor !”

“ It was truly so,” replied I ; “ the enemy, under Murat, lay on the opposite side of the strait : we used to see him every morning riding along his line with his white feather streaming behind him.”

“ He was an excellent cavalry officer,” rejoined the Colonel, leaning forwards, and resting his left elbow on the thigh of the same side, whilst his right hand grasped firmly the opposite knee, his favorite attitude when he was desirous to enforce a point or commence an argument ; “ but he was nothing more.”

“ He was vain, and immoderately con-

ceited," said the Advocate, rousing from his reverie.

"I remarked that he was brave to the highest degree."

"I have heard," interposed the Veteran, "that no man could manage a horse so well; and that, when seated on horseback, his appearance impressed the idea of one of the imaginary heroes of romance."

"He then realized the description of Percy :

To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus
And witch the world with noble horsemanship,"

said the Cantab, affectedly; "I have no doubt that the organs of courage and pugnacity were very largely developed."

"He must have had a fine military air: yet, by Gad! Doctor!" rejoined the Colonel, rising up, and taking two strides across the floor, and wheeling round as he made the remark, "he could not command an army."

"Nor manage a kingdom," said the Advocate.

"Nor conduct a retreat," added the Veteran; "but we must allow, by Gad! that a retreat is the test of generalship."

In admitting the justice of this remark, I delivered my opinion freely on the folly which

led to Murat's operations in the north of Italy, and his wretched retreat upon Naples with the remnant of his army. "As a king, however," I added, "he had a most difficult part to play at Naples."

"True," said the Advocate: "but, to gain his object, he adopted the worst feature of royalty—duplicity: although he endeavoured to put down the Carbonari when they opposed his measures, yet, he afterwards courted them, when he thought they would be serviceable in forwarding his views in the conquest of Italy. He has left behind him no fame but that of a military partizan and a witless monarch; a character for no virtue except that of generosity; and nothing to interest posterity in him, save the romance attached to the conclusion of his career, in his escape from France to Corsica, and the wild adventure which cost him his life."

"Yes," said the Colonel, erecting his tall figure as if at the head of his regiment, "although I regard him as one of those vagabond adventurers who have inflicted such incalculable evils upon Europe, yet I cannot, by Gad! help feeling some pity for him in the manner of his death. What has become of his widow and family?"

I replied that his widow resided for many years in Trieste, where she was much liked by the English merchants, one of whom had introduced me to her son Achille, in London.

“ Eh! eh! to Achille Murat! by Gad!” ejaculated the Veteran, laying a most marked emphasis on his usual oath: “ Pray is he like his father?”

“ Not in the least,” replied I; “ he more resembles Napoleon than Joachim. In stature he is a little below the middle size: has the countenance of a Buonaparte, and a quick, sparkling, intelligent eye. A good-humoured smile constantly plays round his mouth; and, although he is fond of disputation, and can make severe and sarcastic remarks, particularly if theology be the subject of conversation, yet his dissent is gentlemanly, and his arguments demonstrate both a sound, thinking mind, and considerable extent of information. He has nothing of a military air about him, and looks more like a plain country gentleman than the son of a Sovereign.”

“ Of an adventurer,” said the Colonel.

“ Nay, my dear friend,” replied I; “ you must not enquire too closely into the origins of royal families; like scene painting, they require to be looked at from a distance. Colonel

Murat, for so he designates himself, informed me that he was a cotton-planter and a lawyer in Florida, where he usually resides, and which is the place of nativity of his wife, a very pretty little woman ; who seems, however, better adapted to look after and manage his domestic affairs, in his present condition of life, than to grace a throne if he could even recover that of his father."

" God forbid !" ejaculated the Veteran ; " but pray, Doctor, how does he live ? in what degree of style ?"

" In a somewhat retired manner, but very genteel : his pecuniary resources from his plantation and his legal practice in Florida, are, I presume, not great ; but they were aided by an annual allowance from his mother, who is anxious that he should steer clear of all the rocks and shoals of political intrigue."

" I had no idea," said Mrs. Standard, who, with the other ladies, now again joined the group round the fire, " that any of the Buonaparte family could cherish such sensible opinions."

I assured her that the description of Madame Murat, which I had received from my mercantile friend, was highly favourable. Her propriety of conduct, agreeable manners, numerous accomplishments, and sound, good sense, had

rendered her very popular in Trieste ; and although, like her brother, with respect to the title of Emperor, she had the vanity to expect still to be called Queen, when spoken of or addressed, yet, in every other respect, she was unpretending, and displayed the greatest propriety and moderation.

“ Well ! well ! I would not grudge her that empty display of vanity,” exclaimed the Veteran : “ a travelling ensign you know, Doctor, is always, by Gad ! a captain.”

During this conversation, the Advocate, who had not before observed the depression in the countenance of his friend Mordaunt, perceived that he felt no interest in the subject under discussion ; and, therefore, he hastened to change it as soon as possible.

“ I fear, my dear Colonel !” said he, addressing the Veteran, “ if this conversation proceed, we shall get entangled in the net of political controversy, which I detest. You know we hold opposite opinions : but what of that ? You believe with me that the extreme animosity of political parties towards each other, only envelopes the question betwixt them in a darker mist of delusion, so that they often fight for a mere visionary object ; but whilst they are thus opposed, however severe

their attacks upon one another may be in public, that they may, nevertheless, feel the kindest affection towards one another as men. I know some Radicals, even, who are kind-hearted men ; yet, as a party, I think them ultra, hot-headed, jarring, conceited, hypothetical speculators : more anxious even than the Tories for place ; full of selfishness ; and, when they talk of friendship, as much to be suspected as the fellow who impudently thrusts himself forwards and politely offers to hold your writing-case for you, whilst you settle with the guard on stepping out of a stage coach ; and runs off with it as you are feeling for a shilling in the bottom of your purse."

"By Gad! Mr. Oatlands," rejoined the Veteran, "your remarks are correct. There are no good reasons why political animosities should disturb the harmony of private society. I was born and bred a Tory : and I was early taught that an aristocracy is essential to our welfare ; that the immense property of our nobles ought to give them, as it assuredly does, power and influence ; and that the liberty which would render property insecure, must tend to demolish itself. I believe that a state, which does not guarantee the security of property, is little better than a horde of robbers

preying upon one another. But, nevertheless, I have friends even amongst the Radicals. I believe that honesty is more natural to mankind than is usually admitted ; and I rejoice," looking at the Cantab as he spoke, " that my ignorance does not permit me to find out a rogue by the markings on his head, or by any other means, until he violate those compacts in the observance of which honesty consists. But, like you, my dear Sir ! I hate politics ; and, therefore, let us change the subject."

" Let us have another tale," exclaimed the Advocate. " I told mine this forenoon ; and, having fulfilled that part of our compact, I have a right to name the story-teller for this evening. I call upon one of the ladies : it is to the fair sex that we must look for the cultivation of the imaginative faculty in the present day. We live in a period, Colonel, in which the march of utilitarianism is narrowing the genius, and levelling every lofty and romantic sentiment in men."

These remarks of Mr. Oatlands roused the attention of the ladies, who had hitherto seen him only displaying the fire and playfulness of his nature, the buoyancy and spirit of boyhood, under the garb of manhood : they now heard

him giving utterance to sentiments accordant with the sobriety of his years.

“Come,” said he, “Mordaunt! you shall have a story from Miss Standard. Why, my dear fellow! do you look so thoughtful? Am I to imagine that you have dreamt of another benefice; and, on awaking, lo! it was a dream. Never mind! you know I have promised to introduce you to Lord B——. Now, suppose his Lordship before you: what will he say? Let me see—aye! in the first place, he will take you thus by the hand, not like a Lord Chancellor, but like a kind-hearted man; and then he will address you in this manner: ‘Mr. Mordaunt, I shall be most happy to second the wishes of my friend Mr. Oatlands. There are unhappily few men of talent and energy in the church; but, Sir! the vacancies, on that account, are less frequent than they would otherwise be. The order of Nature is reversed in that sacred hive: the drones live,—and the working bees die.’ ”

Mr. Mordaunt smiled, and was about to reply—when he silenced him by saying—“no thanks are requisite, my dear Sir! the recommendation of my friend Oatlands is sufficient.” And, then turning to Miss Standard, he re-

minded her that, as he had the privilege of naming the story-teller, he hoped she was preparing to comply with the demand made upon her for the amusement of the party.

Miss Standard, in vain, attempted to excuse herself on the score of incapacity ; and, although her mother also affirmed that Letitia never had displayed any imaginative talent, yet the Advocate was inexorable. At length, Miss Standard recollected that she had two letters of considerable interest which she had received from a friend, who was since dead ; and she begged to be permitted to read them, instead of drawing upon her own resources, or detailing any incidents that had come under her own notice.

Whilst Miss Standard retired to fetch the letters, Mrs. Standard opened her work-box, and took out her knitting : Aunt Bridget brought some worsted work, which her brother affirmed had been five years in hand : Caroline Ashton drew her chair close to that of her uncle, who lighted his third cigar ; and, spreading his handkerchief on his left knee, crossed his right leg over it, and placed himself in an attitude for listening : Mr. Sketchly, the Cantab, Mr. Oatlands, and myself, drew our chairs around the fire, and Mr. Mordaunt placed him-

self at the table, with his cheek resting upon the thumb and fore-finger of his right hand, in a position which enabled him to read every change of expression on the countenance of Caroline Ashton, without the intensity of its gaze attracting particular notice.

The group was scarcely seated, when the face of a person, apparently the same which I saw in the morning, appeared at the window : at that moment Mr. Mordaunt hastily rose ; and, beckoning Mr. Oatlands, they both left the room. I lost no time in following them, determined, now, that so favourable an opportunity offered of resolving my doubts, not to lose it by delay. It was in vain : on reaching the esplanade, no person was in view, no retreating step was heard ; the moon, which was rising, round and bright, had thrown the deep shadow of the mountain half across Loch Achray, over which a light vapour floated ; and, except the monotonous drum of the waterfall behind the inn, the surrounding scene was as silent as the grave.

For a few seconds, we gazed at each other, with that expression which indicates astonishment : at length, Mr. Mordaunt enquired whether I had not observed a person looking in at the window. “ Yes,” replied I : “ and it was a

face familiar to my recollection—I have seen it once before to-day.” He looked surprised ; and then said that he also thought he had seen it before, but he could not recollect when or where. “ But where is the person ? ” continued he ; “ if he had entered the house, we must have met him ; if he had fled in either of the only directions open to him, we must have heard or seen him : every thing is silent ; it is, indeed, most mysterious.” The Advocate, who treated the circumstance as an optical illusion, added, “ perhaps it is one of those familiar spirits which Jason Pratensis informs us enter into human bodies, cause melancholy, excite jealousy, terrify our souls with fearful dreams, and shake our minds with furies. Mordaunt, if it is an evil spirit, you shall exorcise the devil, should we meet him.”

Mr. Mordaunt smiled at the raillery of his friend : but he looked at me with an earnestness which seemed to say “ there is something very mysterious in this circumstance which we cannot explain.” I felt as much. The Advocate proposed to walk round the house. All was repose : nothing in the smallest degree aided in resolving our doubts ; on the contrary, the mystery in my mind was deepened.

On re-entering the parlour, we found Miss Standard waiting our return.

“Come, Letty!” said the Veteran, “now your audience is collected, begin your friend’s letters.

“There are two letters,” said she: “I shall endeavour to do justice to them; but it requires some nerve to read before so many.” Mrs. Standard and the Veteran gave her, each, kindly looks of encouragement; and, taking up the first letter, she began the narrative which forms the subject of the following chapter.

The Editor has given these letters as he found them in his deceased friend’s portfolio, with the addition only of an appropriate motto.

CHAPTER II.

“ Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediment.”

SHAKSPEARE.

THE PARISH CLERK'S DAUGHTER.

 LETTER I.

“ So, my dear Letitia, you do not find your initiation into the *beau monde* as interesting as you expected: your remarks upon it are, however, vastly diverting; and, as there is a natural love of biography in all minds, I did not find the description of your company tedious; indeed, I should have been glad of a little more of your gossip. How different is my situation here to yours, my dear friend! No person, residing solely in the metropolis, or even in a detached country residence, can form an adequate idea of the society in a small town remote from London!

“ My early life having been diversified rather more than that of most young women of my

age, I am, perhaps, more competent than many to form a comparative estimate of the peculiarity, the prejudice, the want of—(I must borrow an expression from our lively rivals)—the *savoir vivre*, which pervade these provincial dens of lean parsons, and leaner old maids, of small attorneys, and of fat dowagers.

“ It was on a Saturday afternoon that I was ushered into the new scene which this ancient borough presents for my contemplation. A rich, sunny gleam tinged the waters of the small and smooth river from which Averford derives its name ; and threw, over the broad meadows contiguous to the town, that glow of warmth and cheerfulness which seemed to invite the young peasantry into the ample meadows.

“ There are many goodly houses in Averford ; some, indeed, of large dimensions, and approachable by handsome gates, and broad, old-fashioned stone steps. But these spacious abodes lack tenants ; and as scarcely any trade is carried on in this aristocratic little town, there are few inducements to new settlers. The owner, perhaps a crabbed old bachelor, or a widower with only one child (and that not a young man, a thing unheard of in Averford), dwells in the house of his forefathers ; cultivates a large, old-fashioned garden ; hunts ;

goes to church ; attends parish meetings ; and does anything but give parties, or enliven the long, long street, by causing a little stir of carriages within it. One inspiring sight, however, greeted my inquiring glances as the carriage slowly drove through the town. The sound of the church chimes, proclaiming the hour of six, summons, in this primitive place, to their respective tea-drenchings, all the visiting and visitable inhabitants of Averford. Fain would I term this holy monitor a *cat-call*, from the number of tabbies which it rouses from their afternoon slumbers, to enter upon the agitating diversions of a pool of commerce, or the intricate mazes of a Cassino table. I must not, however, be severe, lest my strictures upon the maiden gossips of this town may seem to convey some general reflections upon the venerable body of spinsters to which I am, alas ! but too likely to belong ; if some one, whom you know, returns from Spain, altered in affections as he doubtless will be in person."

Aunt Bridget here interrupted the reading with a remark on the heat of the room ; and took out from her reticule a green fan of very ample dimensions, which she moved with great rapidity.

" But to resume my description. These

important chimes having just doled out the last notes of “ Oh dear, what can the matter be ? ” as I entered Averford, one of the usual parties had assembled, and, as we drew up to my aunt’s door, I had an ample opportunity of observing the arrangement of an Averford rout ; for in the house next to that of my aunt sat a circle of nine ladies, each with a tea-cup and saucer in her hands ; a reverend gentleman, by no means a chicken, forming the only beau of the party.

“ I sighed as I entered my aunt’s abode, and thought of by-gone days ; but I was consoled by the kindness, the affectionate welcome, with which my aunt greeted my first visit to her residence. You are still, I believe, not only ignorant of my aunt’s precise situation and character, but of the circumstances which attended her youth. She is now a placid and somewhat pretty old woman ; and, by the serenity of her demeanour, and the still, unruffled appearance of her humble tenement, you would suppose that neither care, nor any great excitement of gaiety, had ever either caused her gentle heart to throb, or had disturbed her low-roofed apartments with sounds of agitation.

“ I have never disguised from you, my dear friend, that my ancestors, though respectable,

were lowly ; yet may I enter fully into the beautiful sentiment of Cowper, who, though by no means a favourite poet of mine, has touched some of the finest feelings of our nature in his lines on his mother's picture. What is it that he says ? I am not very apt at a quotation—

“ Yet higher far my proud pretensions rise,
The child of parents raised into the skies.”

“ My aunt, the sole remaining member of my family, except myself, was the daughter of the Parish Clerk of Averford. She had one sister, my mother, on whom my fondest recollections still rest with an aching, longing desire to recall to my memory the fading traces of her countenance, her kindness, her manner.

“ My mother, though of humble birth, was the toast and belle of Averford ; for she had been early selected as a companion by one of the proudest Averford spinsters, and had received a careful, and perhaps, for her situation, a too refined education. My aunt, although good-looking, was far inferior in person, and especially in grace, both of form and manner, to her sister ; but the fondest affection subsisted between them, not only unmingled with jealousy on the part of my aunt, but heightened by the pride with which she viewed the accom-

plishments and attractions of her sister. Alas ! for what purpose were such gifts of nature conferred upon her, but to raise her from a station in which, if despised, she was yet contented ; and, if lowly, she was secure !

“ It happened that the young curate of the parish church lodged in the house of his clerk, about the time when my mother had just attained her eighteenth year. Of Mr. Percival, my father, you have often heard me speak ; but my acquaintance with you, my dear Letitia, has been of too recent a date to allow of my communicating all the particulars of his sad history. Of him I speak from hearsay ; for his short career was closed before I had the power of observation, or of recollection. He was an elegant and highly bred young man, of quiet, contemplative habits, and, at that time, as I have been assured, of the strictest practical piety. Unfortunately, he was, by birth, connected with nobility, being the nephew of an Earl, and thus allied to one of the loftiest of those old aristocratic families, of which perhaps soon even the traces will be lost ; since the sons of Dukes are now allied with vocalists, and the theatrical heroines of tragedy are in our days, in so many instances, raised to the dignity which they have sustained

with mimic excellence on the stage. In my father's youth, such elevations were at least unfrequent, if not unheard of; and, nurtured in the loftiest notions of an ancient house, the poverty of that branch from which he sprung only added in his mind an additional motive not by any low connection to add degradation to the other mortifications which his family was sometimes destined to endure.

“ Without any certainty of rising in the church, my father had been bred up to that profession; and he was, at the period of which I am speaking, merely a curate, upon eighty pounds a year, with a small allowance from his father. He was now seven and twenty years of age. As I have said before, I have no recollection of him; but I am told that he was tall and personable, and bore on his countenance the impress of that high descent which was his misfortune, and the expression of that gifted and ardent mind which ought to have sustained him in his troubles. At first, the young Curate was little seen by my grandfather's family; and, although an object of extreme curiosity and speculation in the town, he was seldom visible in the streets, where every passing footstep might be counted. His chief inducement for taking up his abode at my

grandfather's, had been the good character of his clerk, and the quiet and orderly appearance of his apartments. His sitting room is still almost in the same state as when he first occupied it, and it still constitutes the principal *receiving* room of my aunt; for to call it a drawing, or withdrawing-room, would seem absurd in a house where a dinner party is a thing unheard of, and where there is no one to withdraw from but the cat and the servant. This parlour, in short, is a long, low-roofed room, leading into one of those irregular and yet delicious gardens which are often met with in houses of a mediocre description, where the word horticulture has not yet been deemed translatable, and where experience, and not system, regulates the arrangement of a garden. Of arrangement, indeed, there is little enough; the multiplicity and abundance of flowers, and of flowering shrubs, being the chief points considered. Hence that luxuriant flush of bloom along the sunny borders which gratifies the sight without dazzling; and hence that superb variety of the gay, the rich, the delicate, and the soft, which is presented by the careless succession of our commonest plants.

“ My Aunt still tends her small domain with uncommon care and skill. It is her only active

amusement ; yet she tells me that, gay as is her larkspur, rich and majestic her crown-imperials, and delicately fair her Provence roses, her garden now falls far short of what it was in *her* father's time ; for he, good man, between his duties of burying and christening, was thankful enough to doff his demi-clerical character, and to assume that occupation, our taste for which we are said to derive from Adam. But I must not digress ; for I have materials to engage your attention more than sufficient to fill several letters.

“ My father, as I have observed, was of a grave and somewhat reserved disposition ; and, when he entered my grandfather's family, as little thought of becoming companionable with any member of it, as of ringing the church bells himself instead of his host. Yet his pride, I suppose, was soothed by the respectful, but not obsequious manner of the old man, and his reserve dissipated by the unobtrusive yet cheerful aspect of the daughters. I know not how it was ; nor by what witchery such a change could be wrought in the sentiments of one whose only inheritance was his pride of ancestry, and whose sole worldly consideration rested upon an unblemished genealogy. It was even still more singular, that, during two years, my

father, neither by word nor look, revealed that attachment which he had been unable to subdue. Often has he avoided my mother in her evening walk along the avenues of the Priory, or on the green meadows which are watered by the river Aver. Sought and admired by others, and by many superior in wealth, and equal in connections to my father, my mother sometimes wondered, and perhaps with regret, at the reserve and even dislike manifested to her by the young and handsome Curate. Yet, as no woman can remain entirely ignorant of the sentiments with which she has inspired a man who loves her, it is probable that she may have divined and secretly approved the honourable motives which impelled Mr. Percival to avoid obtruding his attentions upon one to whom he was unable to offer his hand. It was not, however, long, before the gossips of Averford discovered a reason for that increasing seriousness which rendered Mr. Percival, notwithstanding all the good qualities which he possessed as a Christian minister, by no means a favourite among them; they had also ascertained the cause that he was "high," and eschewed their pools of commerce, their rubbers of Cassino, and the parties of loo; and that he listened with an indifference, which

they thought contumacious, to the interesting disquisitions upon sequences, flushes, great Casses, and little Casses, “ Pam, be civil,” et cætera, upon which they rung changes, and in which the three Miss Pontains, and the seven Miss Perkins’s, were not only au-fait themselves, but the causes of au-faitness in others; witness the dexterity and celerity of Mr. Waker, the Curate of another village, and the aptitude of Mr. Simpkins, junior, son and heir to a Simpkins who had long flourished in the higher circle of the whist-tables.

“ My father, I have said, was no favourite with the venerable spinsters of Averford; however some of the most juvenile of them might have laid traps for him.”

Here Aunt Bridget shifted her chair, and furled and unfurled her fan with unusual activity.

“ He was not, however, the only object of their speculations, and of their scandalous surmises; for higher game was at hand: nor was it disregarded by the dexterous markswomen, who, if the days of archery were over, could “ shoot out their arrows privily,” as David says, “ with their tongues.”

“ About two miles from Averford there is a house, now deserted and desolate, of respectable antiquity, and of considerable importance,

both in point of situation and of magnitude. This mansion, which has now fallen into the hands of one who loves it not, is seated upon a small eminence, and is backed by very considerable woods, of the finest timber in the neighbourhood. It belonged, in my father's day, to a young lady, the sole surviving member of an opulent and ancient family, who had long possessed the house and fair domain in question.

“ The heiress, who was the envy of the malicious part of the country, and the admiration of the goodnatured portion, had succeeded to her honours by the death of two brothers, both older than herself. Of these, one, the most promising and exemplary of characters, had died of consumption, and had imparted that heart-rending disease, by infection, to his mother, who had tended his last days of gloom and of hopeless decline, with that bursting solicitude and unwearied minuteness of attention which none but a mother evinces. It was not long after the eldest hope of the family had been conveyed to the tomb of his fathers, that his sorrowing parent betrayed symptoms of the fatal complaint by which even the maturer blossoms, as well as the tender buds, are sometimes cut off with a relentless hand. It is pro-

bable that the progress of the disorder was accelerated, not only by grief for the dead, but by the most poignant sorrow and anxiety with regard to the living.

“ The surviving son of Mrs. Courtenay was a young man of a most singular character. Destined for the army, he had been separated early from the domestic circle, to which his brother had been devotedly attached, both from habit, from a principle of duty, and from a feeling of affection. The younger brother (alas! if report speak true, how common is the case!), corrupted by depraved associates in a public school, had lost all congeniality with that home where affection was the household deity, and where innocence was the pervading genius. Accustomed early to all descriptions of vice, and inured to the language of the dissipated, and to the folly of the fool “ who hath said in his heart there is no God,” the young Courtenay had yet a peculiarity in his mode of acting and of thinking viciously, that distinguished him from that herd of the gay, the intemperate and the abandoned, who, like Comus’s band, display but little variety in their debased condition of wickedness. There was a degree of headstrong selfishness in the younger Courtenay, which seemed to have been engen-

dered in him to make the wretched more wretched, and to plunge the sinking spirit into the deepest abyss of misery. After a course of profligacy, which it is of no use to describe, he died also, and the estate of Sudley Park devolved upon his sister.

“Miss Courtenay had possessed it four years, as a minor, when Mr. Percival went to reside at Averford, and had, at that time, just attained what are called years of discretion. The misfortunes of her youth, the loss of some friends, the misconduct of others, the indifference of those that remained to her, and the consciousness that there existed in the family constitution the seeds of a fell disease, had all contributed to form in her an uncommon character. Whilst the deprivation of those whom she most loved had softened and saddened her, the bad conduct of another member of her family had excited her ambition to rescue her name from the disgrace which that member had brought upon it. Subsequently, the necessity of thinking, and the power of acting for herself, gave her an independance of character which some might call eccentricity. It is one of the advantages of wealth and rank, that it is easy to those who possess them to be disinterested. Generosity, and a perfect devotion to her

friends, were strong points in Miss Courtenay's nature. With all this, she was proud, and sometimes satirical: but it was the pride of habit, and of early instruction; for the great land-holders, whether male or female, are, in our country, and perhaps in most others, taught to cherish pride as a necessary accompaniment to, and manifestation of, their dignity. With regard to her satire, it never proceeded from her consciousness of superior talents, nor of her ascendancy over others, but was the instinctive display of a vigorous and discerning mind, acute in seeing imperfections, and averse to any concealment of its crudest perceptions. It was generally thought that the stings of her sarcasm were inflicted with justice, and that, when she thought them merited, she was no respecter of persons. 'The affluent, the self-righteous, the proud, the fashionable, shared alike; and it is wonderful with what patience even those people, who are generally on such happy terms with themselves, will sustain the attacks of the well-born, and the beautiful, and the opulent. "It was her way"—"she meant nothing by it"—"it was all the exuberance of high spirits:" such were the excuses often made for slights, and even ridicule, which, had they proceeded from lowly or unpopular mem-

bers of society, would have been affronts of the first magnitude.

“ It was not until after Mr. Percival had been two years, or rather more, at Averford, that Miss Courtenay came of age. This event was to be celebrated with the utmost splendour upon her own picturesque estate ; and, even in this, she shewed her peculiar nobleness of character. Whilst she allotted to her tenantry their own place in the gala, and assigned them the abundance in which they alone found satisfaction, she rigidly precluded any distinctions being manifested in the invitations, which were extended to all the visiting neighbourhood alike, regardless whether this person was disdained by that, whether the man of faultless escutcheon was seated side by side with him who had soiled his fingers in a reputable trade. For once, she said, she would have her own way. Her guardians and her chaperon had kept her long enough in a cage, and encircled her with a fence-work of exclusion. What was the use of seven thousand a year, but to make oneself beloved, and others happy ?

“ Of course, my mother, whom I shall call henceforth by her name Grace Middleton, and her sister, were not considered as forming a portion of the visiting neighbourhood. Their

father's inmate, however, went ; and Grace, as I have heard, looked wistfully after him as he drove away to the resort of the gay, and doubtless of the attractive assemblage. It was not, however, very late when he returned ; and, as it was a glorious summer's evening, Grace had loitered long amid the flowery domain into which his sitting room opened, and was enjoying, until a late hour, the splendour of the moon-beams, whilst luxuriant nature around her poured forth its scented tributes of nocturnal sweets to evening. A step entering from the house aroused her, and she saw Mr. Percival approaching. His eye was lighted with the excitement so recently passed, of lively society, and agreeable interest. Yet his manner to Grace, as ever, even in his most unguarded moments, was respectful ; for he knew no aristocracy of modesty and virtue. But, on this evening, an unwonted softness characterized his mode of addressing her ; her very deprivation of those enjoyments, which she was eminently calculated to share, her exclusion from scenes which she was formed to adorn, seemed to draw forth an interest towards her which he had hitherto vainly endeavoured to conceal, if not to subdue.

“ ‘ Grace,’ he said, ‘ I have seen many lovely,

many accomplished, and attractive women, among the gay throng which I have just left; but I have seen none whom, had you been there, you would not have equalled, if not excelled. Your lot seems to have been cast amid the humbler scenes of life; but believe me that the time may come when it may not be so. Give me your word, Grace,' pursuing her as she moved along somewhat quickly, 'that you will not bind yourself to any man till all hope of our being united is irrecoverably lost. When that hour of despair comes, when hopelessness succeeds to the exertions which I *shall* make, I will release you, if you then wish it.'

"It were folly to say that Grace was surprised at this language, or that she had not had ample reason to believe that this engagement would be urged upon her. She knew that the proud heart of the young Clergyman had, for some time, been devoted to her with an affection firm as it was generous. For herself, those who have been similarly situated can only know her sentiments. Well-assorted engagements have their enjoyments, their many advantages. The course of their true love is smooth, and reflects nothing but pleasant images on its glassy wave. But the devotion of unpropitious love is heightened by the very

consciousness, that it has no auxiliaries to look for from others. The disapprobation of some, the opposition of others, the indifference of many, to our inmost feelings, makes us cherish the more fondly the object which it requires so firm a grasp to hold. To this, in the case of Grace Middleton, and of those circumstanced like her, additional considerations give force. A woman of generous feelings is deeply penetrated, when a man, greatly her superior in rank, professes an honourable and disinterested attachment to her. His preference of her, to those with whom fate seems to have associated him, flatters not only her vanity, but engages her gratitude ; and a secret triumph is naturally felt, that, whilst the rich and proud would gladly receive the homage of that individual, his warmest affections are given to one who has not worldly advantages to bestow in return.

“ It was, however, with apprehension and reluctance that Grace gave the pledge required of her. She feared to involve one whom she idolized in the miseries of parental displeasure ; she feared to bring upon him the minor annoyances of animadversion and contumely. She dreaded, above all, lest the time should come when he might himself repent of a precipitate and ill-omened engagement. All this she

urged, and yet (what arguments has not love !) she was persuaded into giving an assurance which was fatal to the repose of both. But I have, I am sure, sufficiently stayed your curiosity till the next packet.

“ My aunt’s little tea-table is arranged ; the bright brass tea-urn is singing ; and she summons me to infuse the tea-- a task I would gladly decline, as it is, in her opinion, one of little less importance than the passing of an Act of Parliament, or an order in council at least. Adieu.”

At the conclusion of this letter, the eye of Caroline Ashton, which, during its perusal, had rested on her cousin, met that of Mr. Mordaunt. It was instantly withdrawn ; but a blush overspread the countenance of the lovely girl, and discovered what she could no longer conceal. Mr. Mordaunt’s countenance expressed a marked surprise. What can this mean ? thought I : but the question had scarcely arisen in my mind when Miss Standard proceeded.

LETTER II.

“ Since I last wrote, my dear Letitia, I had hoped that the air of this house might be influential in producing adventures ; but, if the genius of romance once presided over it, he

has fled, and yielded his domain to that of celibacy, who presides, I believe, over Averford. I have seen but two of the male species since I wrote to you : the one was the postman, the other the hair-dresser. So you see I am likely to exercise the virtue of constancy without much difficulty. But to return to my story.

“ You may readily suppose that the attachment of Grace and Mr. Percival was kept secret from all except her sister, for she positively refused to have any concealments from that beloved companion of her infancy. To tell you the anxieties, the hopes, the perplexities attendant upon their mutual secret during the course of the ensuing year, requires far more skill than my untutored pen can command into its service : one source of uneasiness to Grace she suffered unknown to him who was most concerned in it. This was the strong report which began to prevail in Averford, of the attentions paid by Mr. Percival to the heiress of Sudley Park. It was impossible that Grace could shut her ears to this report, although her sister kindly endeavoured to keep it from her ; and, when it reached her, strove to avert its bitterness by professions of perfect confidence in the honour and attachment of Mr. Percival. It was not until long after my

mother's marriage that she heard how the affair really was.

“ Her pride, however, was nettled by the suspicion that, whilst her lover was amusing himself in her society, his serious views were fixed on one much more suitable to his rank and expectations. It was, unfortunately, just at this time that Mr. Percival was summoned on some business to London, whither Miss Courtenay had gone to pass the winter months, —I mean the actual Winter, not that impostor, Spring, who now passes in fashionable language for his hoary-headed predecessor. All the town rang with anticipations of their approaching wedding. The encouragement which had been already given to Mr. Percival was of a character too decided to be mistaken; and, if he had shewn no demonstrations of attachment, still it was well known that he had never paid attentions to any other lady. How did poor Grace's spirit sink within her! she clung to hope; but that state in which hope is alternately succeeded by despair is worse than a certainty of wretchedness. Her mother noticed that she became thin, and that her Hebe-like countenance was shadowed ‘ o'er with that pale cast of thought’ which memory of the absent, and regret for the past, induces. It was in vain

that letters, glowing with such affection as is felt by an ardent but refined mind, and couched in such terms as such a mind chuses to express affection, came, more frequently than angel visits, to soothe her anxious spirit: reading, unhappily, with a jaundiced eye, she found, in those expressions of fondness, some alteration, some coolness, which justified her apprehensions, and rendered every thing short of an interview unsatisfactory.

“ Meantime, let us look a little into the state of Miss Courtenay’s heart. Placed upon such a pinnacle of prosperity, she had yet retained the passions of an enthusiastic girl, whilst she acquired the determination of an indulged, self-willed, and independant woman. Adulated, and really admired as she was on the day of her first meeting with Mr. Percival, by a contrariety not unusual, she turned with indifference from those who paid her homage, to him whose pride it was never to flatter. She was struck by his personal attractions, but still more with that grace and dignity of deportment, without which mere excellence of flesh and blood challenges no other species of admiration than that which is due to a fine breed of horses or a prize ox. She was interested, upon nearer acquaintance, by the evident traces of

reflection, aided by sedulous culture, which were manifested in Mr. Percival's conversation, although without the slightest display ; for his taste was too fastidious to admit of that which, either in man or woman, betrays a deficiency in real delicacy of feeling. Miss Courtenay was further disposed to consider all these points as heightened in her romantic mode of viewing them, by the circumstance that Mr. Percival was poor, but of high descent. Of wealth, a mere accidental distinction, she thought little, and less, that she had, of late years, associated nothing with it in her own mind but care and responsibility ; but high birth was, from the very romance of her character, a considerable adjunct, if not a requisite feature, in her delineation of imaginary excellence. This foible of hers is not to be justified ; and a skilful utilitarian might have demolished it at once in argument ; but he would never have been invited to Sudley Park again ; for the fair Amabel was a despot in her faith, and would have cordially hated the whole sect, had they existed in her time. No : middle-aged, hard-hearted men, hot from the counting-house, or turned into marble from Cambridge, may advocate doctrines which justify their own disagreeableness, and make selfishness, dryness, and

calculation fashionable ; but the young and generous will long resist such indigestible mental food as their dogmas offer, and will form a barrier, I trust, against such methodical innovations upon our natural perceptions of what is right."

" She writes well," said the Cantab, interrupting the reader ; " but she knows little of political economy : but go on."

" I digress sadly, and must pray for your indulgence, with the usual child-like promise that I will do so no more. Since even the learned and philosophical Bishop Watson acknowledges his satisfaction that his ancestors were ' neither hewers of wood, nor drawers of water,' I do not think Miss Courtenay so very inexcusable in her predilection for high birth. But, if she loved rank, she valued nobility of soul far more. She fancied that Mr. Percival possessed this ; and she yielded to her predilection for him with that carelessness of consequences which was a part of her character. Accustomed to obtain every thing that she desired, she never dreamt of not receiving a full measure of return for her disinterested devotion. She listened to him with eagerness from the pulpit : she thought of him, and of him only, in private. Every wish of her heart was

centered in obtaining his approbation. She dressed to his taste, she sang his favourite songs, she read his favourite poets ; if he suggested an improvement in her grounds, it was begun instantly ; if he offered the slightest counsel upon her behaviour, it was received with unfeigned gratitude, and acted upon without delay.

“ So marked a preference could not escape the observation of her chaperon, and of humble dependants, who are ever on the look out to know which way the wind blows : neither could it be altogether unperceived by Mr. Percival. Not to be flattered by it, was not in human nature, and he appreciated, as a gentleman ought to do, regard so disinterested ; but never did his fidelity, still more his affections, waver between the humble object of his secret love and the rich and beautiful Miss Courtenay. Meanwhile, still detained in London by some family matters, he was not only exposed frequently to what would have been to other men temptation, but he was the cause of much misery to Grace, and eventually to himself. It was now, for the first time during her short life, that her health began to decline. That mysterious irritation produced on our bodily frame by mental sufferings began to wear away a constitution

naturally vigorous, although linked with a mind of strong sensibility. When my father returned, he was shocked at the change in her :—her bloom, often still bright, but evanescent, was succeeded by the pallidness of a statue ; the tremulous walk ;—her spirits too easily excited to joy, too readily depressed till the weakened frame relieved itself by tears.

“ These indications alarmed Mr. Percival greatly, both for the present and the future ; for he saw how inadequate Grace now was to contend with the undiminished obstacles to their marriage, or to sustain the possible final result of a secret and imprudent union, embittered by poverty.

“ Spring came ; but it found the once blooming and happy Grace still languishing and declining. Her fears of Percival’s constancy were indeed exchanged for a renewed reliance upon his faith ; but the dread of embroiling him in difficulties, and the thousand nameless anxieties attendant upon a long engagement, were too great for a mind of no vulgar stamp. Her father, between the duties of burying and christening, never thought of love ; and, when he said ‘Amen’ to the marriage service, thought far less of the cause of that ceremony than of its effects : for the marriage fees, doled out

slowly and perhaps reluctantly by the poor, and bestowed with ostentation of love and money by the rich and genteel, added to the sort of importance which the deputy manager of the sacred performance obtains, were far more in his thoughts than the sentiments of the respective parties towards each other. He helped on his clerical master with his surplice, reverberated his words through the long-drawn aisles, or waddled after him into the church-yard, without ever dreaming that the proud young Curate could condescend to bestow a thought on any one of his family.

“ Meantime the romantic attachment of Miss Courtenay was increased by uncertainty, and, strange to say, by the evident reluctance of Mr. Percival to unfold his sentiments to her. As she had unconsciously learned never to doubt that all she wished must be hers, she unresistingly indulged the idea that he was secretly devoted to her; but that his laudable pride, and his hatred of fortune-hunters, alone prevented an avowal. Her nature was also proud, and replete with womanly feelings. She could not resort to any little contrivances, or indelicate demonstrations of passion, to draw forth the sentiments which she fondly hoped one day to hear. Whilst things were in this state, an

incident occurred which tore the veil from the eyes of this generous and enthusiastic young lady, and placed her in a situation of all others the most trying to our sex.

“ It was on a fine evening, in the month of May, that Miss Courtenay took it into her head to enjoy a solitary walk. She often loved to escape, in this manner, from the hired assiduities of the people about her, to whom she was a lavish, but not a partial mistress; for she could not persuade herself that, whilst their interest forms so predominant a motive to their services, affection could have any great share in them. Milton loved to walk ‘by hedge-row elms on hillocks green,’ and so did Miss Courtenay; for the walk she chose had no other remarkable features. It was, however, a favorite resort of the Averford old maids, on account of its general dryness (a quality perfectly in unison with them),—and also because its well-trodden path—not wide enough for four, but a little too wide for three—was well adapted for scandal.”

Here Aunt Bridget half rose from her seat, then sat down again, spread smooth her apron, and looked at Mr. Oatlands:—a spoke was broken in her fan.

“ It was likewise intersected, at sundry distances, by little gates, which afforded sweet

opportunities for a little gallantry, when the two Miss Sprats, ætat. 58 and 52, happened to be escorted by the beau of our Parish, Mr. Nicholas (commonly called Old Nick), ætat. 61.

“ Miss Courtenay had proceeded half way through this terrace walk, towards Averford, when her course was arrested by a sight which plunged her into an agitation, such as those who know what it is to be suddenly undeceived in a cherished hope can only tell. She beheld the idol of her affections walking slowly towards her, in earnest conversation with a young and beautiful woman, who leaned fondly on his arm, and whom he seemed to be supporting and soothing with that tenderness towards the gentle and the sick which forms so lovely a trait in the manly character. At times they stopped, and leaned, as for support, upon the little gates just mentioned, when Miss Courtenay saw, with heart-thrilling conviction, that the hand of the fair sufferer was warmly pressed in that of Mr. Percival, that her eyes were turned to his with that expression with which an early and pure attachment lights the countenance of beauty.

“ To return unperceived was not impracticable ; because the attention of the lovers was so much engrossed with each other, that they

had not seen her. But to return was not in character with Miss Courtenay's disposition. 'I will not retire,' thought she, 'as a spy—wretched and hopeless as I am. Since all is lost, I will show him nobly that I know his secret, and nobly that I can bear it.' The effort was made; and, as she passed Mr. Percival, and showed him that courtesy which was habitual in her to all, his cheek was far more suffused by blushes than her own. Yet her smile, though bright, was transient; and her bright eye, lighted up as it was when she passed him by the excitation of the moment, was almost immediately afterwards suffused with tears.

" 'Who is that beautiful creature?' enquired Grace, as she passed rapidly by.

" 'It is Miss Courtenay,' replied my father.

" 'Then,' said Grace, half playfully, half reproachfully, 'I do not wonder that you stayed so long in London.' "

Mr. Mordaunt fixed a determined gaze on Caroline Ashton, whilst a tear half started into his eye.

" It was some weeks after this little occurrence, that Mr. Percival received a note from Miss Courtenay. I have formerly read it, and, as far as I remember, it ran thus :

“ ‘ Do not accuse me of impertinent interference in your concerns, if I wish to see you, relative to the living of Chorley : it has become mine by recent purchase. I say no more until I see you.’

“ You may now guess the result ; for I think a *woman* can enter into the generous motives by which Miss Courtenay was actuated. The interval after her meeting my father with Grace was passed, first, in learning to think of him as one whom she had no right to love, and for whom she was not allowed to feel an interest. This was a hard lesson, and she found that nothing is so difficult as to cease hoping. Fortunately for her, a call was made upon her generosity ; and it is more easy for such characters as hers to act well, than to regulate their feelings in a state of repose from action. By her inquiries she learned who Grace was, and then the whole truth flashed upon her. She contrived also to make my Aunt aware that she had some scheme to benefit Mr. Percival, in which her sister was included. She then took her measures accordingly ; and, as to the rich all things of that nature are easy, she shortly accomplished the object of her desire.

Mr. Percival reached Sudley Park in no

small degree of agitation. With what various feelings he entered the spacious and tasteful library, in which he expected to find Miss Courtenay, it is impossible to do more than conjecture. He found her not there, however; but in a few minutes she entered. Her dark and beaming eye sank beneath his inquiring glance as she came towards him; but it was the confusion of the moment. Yet her cheek flushed as she extended her hand towards him. In that hand she held the documents relative to a valuable living, which she had sacrificed a considerable portion of her property to purchase. She briefly explained to him the particulars necessary to make him aware that the rectory was his, and then awaited his reply. Mr. Percival was overpowered with contending feelings: he felt, but feared, the debt of gratitude; for he had partly guessed the sentiments towards himself which the beautiful heiress had but little endeavoured to conceal. The title deeds almost dropped from his hand. Miss Courtenay, however, quickly relieved his perplexities.

“ ‘ My motives,’ she said, ‘ may be strictly questioned by many, and doubtless will be so, when I shall have to render an account of the talents entrusted to me. They are sim-

ply these : I believe that you will conscientiously discharge, in this new office, those duties which you have so well fulfilled here. I, for one, have to thank you for some serious impressions which may, perhaps, avail me in hours of sorrow.' The tear stood in her eye ; but she proceeded. ' But I believe, I hope, that you will also have the happiness of sharing your duties with a being deservedly beloved.' She paused ; for a deep crimson suffused the face of her auditor. ' I am right, am I not ? Forgive me for touching on a subject so dear to you.' Her voice faltered as she spoke, and her trembling lips refused almost to do their office. ' Mr. Percival,' she resumed, in an earnest and almost solemn tone, ' your family will be averse to this union ; your pride of birth, your early prejudices, are against it ; but, oh ! be faithful to a heart whose first affections you have gained ; place her in your own rank—support her in it courageously, firmly !' Mr. Percival raised his eyes to gaze on the noble-hearted woman, but she was gone.

“ Well ! in a month the bells of Averford rang merrily for the wedding of the handsome young Curate to the Clerk's daughter. My grandfather was so overcome at the circumstance that he could not have said ' Amen' at his

daughter's wedding. Luckily for the proprieties of the thing, he fell into a grave the week before, sprained his ankle, and was obliged to have a deputy, both to give his daughter away, and to perform the responses. The bride looked more than usually beautiful, although there was a delicacy in her complexion which still augured ill health; and it was even then prophesied, by some of the croakers of the place, that she would not enjoy her prosperity long: but the more favourable observation was, that her ill health made her look the more like a lady, and fitter to be the parson's wife. My Aunt has still a picture of her in her wedding dress. By the bye, I think wedding dresses in general the most tawdry, ill-fitting things. I have a friend who wears hers regularly every year, and supposes that a dress made for her when she was thin and pretty can suit her when she has had a dozen children. But my mother's was a very simple attire. Her rich hair, untutored by the fashion of the time to travel upwards, when nature intended it to shade her fair forehead, was suffered to appear in unadorned ringlets under a white lace veil, the present of my great great Aunt Tabitton, who sent it to her from Northamptonshire. I forget the other details of her dress; nor will you expect me to

give you a dissertation on her dress with the same precision as the *Ladies' Magazine*, or the *Belle Assemblée*. But this I know, that she not only looked so lovely, that the ladies, in allusion to a novel of Miss Burney's, called her *Evelina*, but also so elegant, that some of the genteeldest people in *Averford* were proud to speak of her afterwards as their acquaintance. Indeed, it was remarkable that those who had not deemed her worth a glance, as they passed her, now began to speak of her as 'their friend *Miss Middleton*, their charming protégée, their sweet and interesting early acquaintance.'

"For my father, I am told that he was the handsomest bridegroom that had been seen in *Averford* for a century : but that is not saying much. However, he looked like what he was, the Honourable and Reverend *Mr. Percival* ; and, I may say, conducted himself as such. My mother trembled as the solemn service proceeded ; but the tears were all shed by her sister and her fond mother, the latter especially, who foresaw, in her child's elevation, estrangement from her humble home. *Miss Courtenay* was not present ; for she was absent from her home, on a hasty excursion to the *Lakes*.

"Well,—and here my story might end well, and you might be left to conjecture years of

happiness to the fond pair whom I have described at the altar. But, alas! how few years have elapsed since that period, and here am I alone, an orphan,—my poor Aunt and I only remaining of that generation of her family!

“ The first affliction that my parents sustained was in the untimely death of Miss Courtenay. She lived but little at the Park after their marriage, but entered into the gaieties of a London life,—happy, perhaps, to escape her own thoughts; and, being idolized in society, she enjoyed it with the enthusiasm natural to her age and character. Yet, I am told, that, even in her brightest moments, traces of sadness were perceived upon her countenance when the neighbourhood of Averford was remarked upon. Her kindness to my parents continued unabated; and by her request I received her name. How shall I communicate the fate of this lovely and beloved lady, my father’s sole benefactress, who befriended him at the expense of her own happiness? She died in consequence of breaking a blood-vessel, the prelude to that ravaging malady to which her mother and brother had fallen a sacrifice. By her will I am, as you know, entitled to what is termed a gentlewoman’s fortune—£200 a year. In some memoranda found

amongst her papers, she specified that she felt no desire to enrich me, even if the claims upon her estate had enabled her; for she had herself experienced how little happiness a large fortune entailed upon woman. The rest of her personal property was divided, with some eccentricity, amongst relatives and friends; but the same concern for the lowly and unfortunate, and indifference to the great and prosperous members of her family, was apparent in this last memento. Taught from my infancy to love her name and memory, you must forgive my dwelling upon her last actions with fond prolixity.

“ The rest of my narrative is a painful one. My mother became more and more feeble after my birth; yet I had attained my fifth year when I lost her. Of this event I have a confused remembrance. I recollect awaking in the night; a ringing of bells, a running to and fro, for a time aroused me, and then I fell asleep again. In the morning, they told me I had a little sister born; but scarcely was I dressed than they whispered to each other that she was dead. I have a faint recollection of seeing a little baby in a neatly ornamented cradle, and remember wondering at its stillness, and touching its cold cheek with my finger. It was indeed dead! yet its little cap was neatly plaited

round its face ; and, by its pretty bed-gown so carefully arranged, I thought at first they had laid it down to sleep : so slow is the apprehension of children concerning death !

“ Then I was sent away from home, and was told my mamma was very ill, and that it was thought better that she should not see me ; but I found afterwards that she had asked for me. Alas ! I soon forgot her, in new scenes and with new companions. I was brought back to console my father on the day of my mother’s funeral. Well do I even now remember his altered face ; the work of years seemed to have been effected on his countenance. I remember his kissing me hurriedly, and then sending me away again. I remember too the deep, muffled tones of the church bells, the association with which is sometimes revived by similar tones, and never fails to produce, even in my gayest moments, a seriousness almost amounting to awe.

“ And so my father and I were left alone together. It was many years after my mother’s death, that he put upon my finger a ring. ‘ Amabel,’ he said, ‘ in a calm but solemn tone, ‘ a few hours before your mother was taken to eternal rest, she took from her finger the rings which I had placed upon it at the moment of

our union. One of these she gave to me,—the first, last pledge of that love which will never die in me,—which now, I trust, yet exists in her, in her purified and blessed state. Another she gave to your Aunt; this one, my child, she begged me to reserve for you.’

“ It was not long after this, that I was left an orphan. The seeds of death were in my father’s frame when he for the first time brought himself to speak to me of my mother; for he was, as you know, a reserved man, and, to me, an object of fear as well as of love.

“ When he believed, and humbly hoped, that his time of rejoining those that are dead in the Lord was about to arrive, he spoke often, and indeed loved to talk to me of my mother. He spoke of the time when we should all three be united. He laboured hard, and, I trust, not ineffectually, to promote in me an habitual dependance on that Being who is to the desolate ‘ Father and Mother, and Brother and Sister.’ By his desire, I received the last sacrament with him, although I was then scarcely fifteen years of age. You may believe how indelibly that solemn occasion is impressed upon my memory. You will not, I hope, too soon be made to comprehend with what anguish of heart I followed my last remaining parent to

the grave. Alas ! Letitia, it was long before I could bring my mind into that holy state that I could thank God ‘ for all his servants departed this life in his fear and love.’

“ Adieu. You asked for a letter ; I have sent you a volume. Write soon ; and believe me to be ever—ever yours,

AMABEL PERCIVAL.”

‘The male part of the auditory were greatly delighted with the easy and pleasing style of these letters ; and the display of good sense and right feeling which they indicated as characterizing the mind of the fair writer. I confess that I felt all the mother mounting to my eyes, on listening to the high and generous conduct of Miss Courtenay ; and, in the exposure of my weakness, I was consoled to see that the most apparently volatile of the party, the Advocate, was also melted into tears.

I can listen to tales of distress and misery, which harrow up the feelings and bring tears into the eyes of others, without being subdued ; but I never yet heard the recital, nor read of any act of warm benevolence, or of noble philanthropy, without finding my eyes instantly suffused with moisture. I can read of Lefevre’s distress unmoved ; but, when my Uncle Toby

in parting with his son, slips into his hand sixty guineas, tied up in an old purse of his father, in which was his mother's ring, and bids "God bless him," I am utterly unnerved, and cry like a child.

"I am undetermined, Miss Standard," said the Advocate, "whether most praise be due to the fair writer of these excellent letters, or to her friend who has done them so much justice in the reading. What think you, Miss Bridget?"

"Indeed, Mr. Oatlands," replied the good old maid, "the diction of the letters is beautiful; but it is to be lamented that there is less of the true Christian spirit in Miss Percival than ought to be: I could not have thought that she had so much satirical acrimony in her composition. She might have spared a little of the cayenne in her remarks upon old maids."

"True, my dear Miss Bridget," said the Advocate; "but they are darts which fall harmless in the present day, when no such beings exist. I am advancing into the vale of years myself, and do not see so well as formerly; but, truly, I have not traced a grey hair on any lady above forty, for many years."

Miss Bridget looked confused; and perceived that more eyes than one were turned towards her curls.

“ Wigs all—by Gad !” said the Veteran, “ but they cannot fill up the wrinkles.”

“ Why should they ?” rejoined Mr. Oatlands. “ I even prefer grey hair to black wigs ; and, in my humble opinion, no character is more respectable, or more agreeable, than a well-informed woman of fifty or upwards, whether spinster or wife, who has the good sense to support her years with sobriety and dignity.”

Mrs. Standard bowed ; and Aunt Bridget smiled in a manner which was creditable to her good sense and natural feelings.

As it was now late, a plan was proposed for ascending Ben Venue on the following day, and for previously breakfasting in the beautiful pass of Bulloch-nam-Bo.

“ As I shall not accompany the party,” said Mrs. Standard, “ I shall have every thing provided for a comfortable breakfast.”

The ladies soon retired, and the whole group separated for the night.

Having brought up my journal to this point, I contemplated the indulgence of my customary quarter of an hour's nap in my chair before retiring to bed. I was lulled to sleep by the

monotonous sound of the waterfall behind the inn, which Dugald had not incorrectly concluded would suit my fancy ; but the drowsy power had scarcely pressed upon my eyelids, when I dreamt that one whom I had long endeavoured to forget stood before me in all her original loveliness and purity, smiling like an angel. She laid her hand softly upon mine, and her lips moved as if she was about to speak, when I awoke. The impress of her presence had been so vivid that I gazed around me to determine its reality ; and some minutes elapsed ere I could convince myself that it was a picture of the imagination. It had brought with it, however, recollections of the most painful kind ; I rose from my chair, and threw up the window of my little room to change the train of thought by looking out into the night.

Whoever, to fill up an idle hour, shall cast his eye over these notes, may smile at this movement ; but it is one of a few peculiarities which I have fostered on principle ; and which have been the sources of much of the little comfort which has sustained me amidst the cares and corroding anxieties which have tainted my cup of life. When any thing occurs to annoy or to vex me, when my mind is irritated or my temper ruffled, in order to sooth the one and to

calm the other, to stifle discontent or to mitigate suffering, I endeavour to withdraw as it were from the affairs of man ; and, by the contemplation of Nature, to elevate my thoughts above the little perturbations of human society, by those feelings of gratitude and humility which are ever awakened in reflecting on the supreme wisdom and the boundless benevolence of the Deity, as displayed in his works. I rose, therefore, and threw open the window.

It was the same lovely night as the preceding, except that the stillness and solitude were increased by the lateness of the hour, for it was near mid-night ; and a broader stream of light was reflected from Loch Achray, owing to the altitude of the moon, which was now approaching the zenith. The freshness of the air, and the contemplation of the peaceful scene upon which I gazed with delight, soon composed the agitation of my spirits ; and I was considering the propriety of retiring to rest, when a boat slowly crossed the light on Loch Achray, and the sound of a flute, as if played upon the water, attracted my attention.

“ What strange beings love makes of us,” thought I : for it instantly occurred to me that the flute-player was Mr. Mordaunt, who had adopted this method of indulging the romance

of his passion for the lovely girl so exclusively the object of his attention. The air was the “*Di tanti palpiti*” of Rossini : I had never heard it executed with more expression and delicacy of feeling. It was soon followed by one of those lively and engaging Swiss airs which I had often listened to with additional delight from the charms which they acquire when sung amongst their native mountains. As I perceived that the boat neared the shore, and three individuals landed, I expected to see the Clergyman return to the inn ; but, after waiting upwards of half an hour, I was convinced that my conjecture was incorrect ; yet, who else would visit the Lake at that hour ? Mr. Mordaunt had also given us a specimen of his skill in touching the instrument which I had just heard ; nevertheless, why did he not return to the inn ? Where could he be gone ? These were questions that presented themselves, which I could not solve, and which threw a mystery over this little incident. Has this serenading, again thought I, any connection with the mysterious appearances of the individual who has twice shewn himself to-day ? The question could not be answered ; but it did not tend to lessen the obscurity which hung over both incidents. I might puzzle myself with endeavouring to re-

move the veil which darkened them ; but no effort of thought could lead to the truth : I determined, therefore, to wait until time and opportunity performed what could not be affected at present ; and, closing the window, I retired to bed, and soon sank into a sound and refreshing sleep.

CHAPTER III.

“ The innocent Morn—

When, from the slow unfolding arms
Of Night, she starts in all her charms,
And o’er the glorious earth is borne,
With orient pearls beneath her feet ;
All round her music warbling sweet,
And o’er her head the fulgent skies
In the fresh light of Paradise.”

WILSON.

I WAS conning over in my mind these beautiful and appropriate lines of Wilson as I descended to the esplanade, where those who proposed to climb Ben Venue had already assembled. It was, indeed, such a morning as the poet describes ; and its influence was perceptible upon every face of the little group : the smile on the lovely and open countenance of Caroline Ashton, as if the offspring of the pure, deep, blue ether, over which the rising sun now shot his radiance, beamed with a renovated, “ gladdening grace ;” the meek and pensive look of her cousin seemed tempered with a greater depth of serenity ; the buoyant

spirits of the Advocate were expending their exuberant playfulness in gamboling with a greyhound, the property of the landlord ; the expression of Mr. Sketchly denoted the inward satisfaction of a truly benevolent heart, happy in itself ; the Cantab's countenance indicated, to use the language of the Cantab himself, a large development of the organs of gratification and anticipated enjoyment ; the only individual who did not harmonize with the feelings which the morning inspired, was Mr. Mordaunt, who looked grave. He looked, indeed, as if sleep had not pressed his eyelids : and again arose the idea in my mind that he was the musician on Loch Achray : but where had he spent the night ? That was a question which was to be resolved before my suspicion could be received as fact.

“ What ails you, Mordaunt ? ” said Mr. Oatlands, commencing a train of good-natured raillery on his friend's melancholy visage. As he concluded his tirade, he looked into the face of Caroline Ashton : and then, without waiting for a reply from Mr. Mordaunt, he turned round and informed me that he had taken the liberty of sending forward honest Dugald, along with the Colonel's servant, with the sumpter basket, cloaks, and umbrellas. “ You

will find," said he, turning to the ladies, "a glorious breakfast ready for you in the pass;" and then scampered off down the glen with the fleetness of a deer, and the greyhound bounding at his heels.

"What an extraordinary person," said I, gazing after him; "he retains all the buoyancy of early youth."

"Yes," said Mr. Mordaunt, whom this remark on his friend seemed to awaken from a reverie; "age, in Oatlands, has augmented the powers of a most extraordinary intellect, without, in the smallest degree, impairing the youthful vigour of his bodily frame, or deadening the fire and playfulness of his boyhood. You have never heard him plead, Doctor; I wish I could obtain for you an opportunity of judging of his powers of oratory."

I bowed; and, not seeing my old friend the Colonel, enquired whether he and Miss Bridget had deserted us?

"They have," replied Miss Standard; "but my father has sent a commission for you to supply his place; and to take Caroline under your care."

"I feel highly flattered," replied I; "but"—and I cast my eye upon the Clergyman, who seemed again absorbed in thought.

“Nay, Doctor!” said the lively girl, placing her arm in mine; “Letty has delivered her orders: there is no declaring off: my uncle, you know, is your superior officer; therefore, you must obey, and take me for better for worser.”

This remark raised a faint smile in Mr. Mordaunt, as he offered his arm to Miss Standard: the Cantab and Sketchly had already paired off; and, in this manner, we proceeded down the glen.

I had now an opportunity of judging of the character of my lovely and animated companion; for, hitherto, I had observed her only at a distance. I found that the excess of her animal spirits was tempered by a high and elevated tone of mind, richly stored from the best sources of both ancient and modern English literature; that she was an enthusiastic admirer of Nature; possessed a chaste and correct taste for poetry, her acquaintance with which was not confined to English or rather British Poets, but extended to that of Italy and Germany; whilst, at the same time, her disposition was so open and unsuspecting as to introduce you at once into the knowledge of all that she thought and felt. I have already described the character of her beauty; it was heightened in

conversation by a sparkling brilliancy of eye, and a smile which spread over her features an impress of angelic sweetness, perfectly enchanting. “No wonder that Mr. Mordaunt is captivated,” thought I: “except in one other individual, never have I beheld such an approach to that which is surely the semblance of an inhabitant of heaven. Is it possible that falsehood or deception can ever dwell in such a frame? O, Amelia!—but I will not upbraid your memory! You were unhappy in the wrong you did me; and, now that the silence of the grave covers your errors, my injuries shall never disturb its repose.” As these thoughts passed through my mind, a suppressed sigh escaped me, which was observed by my companion.

“My uncle, Doctor!” said she, not daring to look up while she spoke, “has so often talked of the liveliness and inexhaustible hilarity of your spirits, that I am almost tempted to put a very rude question to you; and that deep sigh emboldens me still more to do so:—may I inquire what has caused an alteration so striking in you?”

“Your uncle, Miss Caroline,” replied I, “has too highly coloured the portrait which he has drawn of his friend; when we were first

acquainted, I was young, thoughtless, and had experienced few of the cares of life."

"Does so short a course of life (for you cannot, Doctor, plead age) so overpress the mind as to force it to vent its wretchedness in sighs? if so, I never wish to see forty."

"God forbid! my dear young lady! I trust you may never experience those feelings which produced the evidence of their existence in my bosom: it was not intended for your observation."

"Pardon me, Doctor!" rejoined she; "I am rude to remark upon it; but my uncle has spoken so often and so much of you, that I almost imagine that I have known you from my infancy, and am privileged to ask you so impertinent a question. Tell me," said she, changing the subject, "how you like Mr. Oatlands?"

"I scarcely know what to think of him," replied I.

"He has been," continued Miss Ashton, "our travelling companion for nearly three weeks: the more we see and know of him, the more singular and amiable he appears. Although he looks so juvenile, yet, he is a married man, has a large family, and, I am told, a most agreeable wife; but I understand

that she is wholly devoid of that vivacity which is his characteristic."

"Indeed!" said I.

"He is esteemed," continued my fair companion, "one of the commanding orators of the Scottish bar. I long to hear him speak in court; for, occasionally, when he becomes energetic in argument, his manner, and his language, mingled as it is with Scottiscisms, is so forcible, that I am satisfied he must be very eloquent when earnestly engaged in his profession."

"His friend Mr. Sketchly," said I, "has informed me that his public influence is great in the Scotch metropolis. He says that his talents early displayed themselves; and that he has fully realized the promise of his youth. He was one of a constellation of distinguished characters, who, at the close of the last century, were pursuing their studies at the University of Edinburgh, and constituted the members of a literary society, the *Speculative*, which has been long celebrated for sending forth extraordinary men; those brilliant lights, in the literary and scientific world, whose radiance sheds such lustre on Scotland, as poets, historians, statesmen, and philosophers. His associates there have all effected something to secure

their names from oblivion ; while some of them, by the power of talent and unwearied industry, have attained situations of high distinction in the state ; nevertheless, Mr. Sketchly affirms that fame is not the idol of his friend's ambition ; that he might have possessed both place and power, had he aimed at them ; but that his desire is to be thought an honest man, leaving greatness to follow as it may."

My lovely companion here interrupted me by stating that she had received the same account from Mr. Mordaunt.

" His highest pleasure, Mr. Mordaunt informs me," continued she, " is in the periodical visits of a few of his earliest friends, the companions of his boyhood, who meet once in three or four years, at his residence, to retrace former enjoyments in their school-day haunts, and to indulge in those vagaries which he calls high jinks, so much prized by you Scotsmen. Nothing astonishes me more," added she, " than the contrast between your countrymen at home and abroad. I have seldom seen a Scotsman beyond the border who was not as demure as a quaker."

" I admit the accuracy of your remark," my dear Madam," replied I : " may I venture to infer that it is only abroad that you have

found my countrymen so insipid? at least, Mr. Oatlands is an exception."

"A notable one, indeed," exclaimed the laughing girl; "I like his very absurdities; there is so much of nature in every thing he does: although I sometimes imagine that he supposes heaven to be a Highland mountain; for he declares that he knows no happiness greater than that produced by ranging over the heathy shoulders, as he expresses himself, of these giants of the north. You will see him to-day in all his glory."

I ventured to remark, that the feeling respecting mountainous districts is not peculiar to Scotsmen, but common to all mountaineers.

"Come, Doctor, you must explain that to me," said she, looking in my face with a smile so fascinating as to convert her request into an irresistible command. "I have," continued she, "so often heard the saying, that I am dying to learn its explanation."

The smile, the musical sweetness, the delicacy, of her voice, as it struck my ear, and the playful, yet earnest manner of her request, startled me, and renewed those painful recollections which had drawn forth the sigh which attracted her notice. I involuntarily stopped and gazed at her; but it was Caroline Ashton

who hung upon my arm. She was too polite to notice my confusion ; and, quickly recovering myself, I remarked that the explanation which she requested was by no means easy ; and, although I had the most complete conviction of the truth of the feeling, yet, I had scarcely reflected on its causes.

“ Nay then,” said she, “ give me your opinion, such as it is.”

“ Well,” replied I, “ you will not deny that all our most firmly rooted predilections are those formed in boyhood and youth ; and, admitting this, you wish to know what those are which implant a stronger affection for home in mountaineers than in the inhabitants of less elevated regions ?”

“ That is exactly my object.”

“ Well then, in my opinion, they may be resolved into two ; namely, the impression which mountain scenery makes upon the mind, and that necessity which a thinly peopled country, difficult of access, and seldom visited by strangers, imposes upon its inhabitants to form close bonds of amity with one another. With respect to the first of these causes, which may be considered, if not the most powerful, at least the most natural, it is evident that a mountainous district is better calculated to fill both

the eye and the imagination than a flat one. The mind, also, shares in the expansiveness of the visual boundary : in ascending a mountain, we experience a loftier elevation of soul ; we seem to ourselves greater and more important beings, as a portion of that Nature which is so amply spread out before us. There is, besides, another mental feeling more powerfully roused in a mountainous than in a flat country, arising from the nature of the region preventing almost the possibility of enclosure : it is that of liberty, of a higher degree of freedom, and the absence of that exclusion which is invariably experienced in a cultivated and well-peopled district. In climbing the heathy summits, and ranging the wooded tracts on the mountain brow, although we are aware that it belongs to some one, yet, it appears as if it were common property ; we roam, therefore, free and unrestrained, and recognize ourselves, in the fullest sense of the expression, as the lords of the creation. This feeling of liberty is, also, favorable to the indulgence of that indolence which an ancient philosopher has regarded as the chief good ; and that pride which not only prevents the Highlander from engaging in any thing like steady labour, but makes him indifferent about those comforts which are the reward of industry

in more civilized and less romantic regions. The pastoral life, which is common to all mountaineers, greatly favors these habits."

"But how does your position, Doctor," said my fair companion, "accord with the military habits of the Highlanders?"

"All warlike nations," replied I, "are rude nations; for war has always been the occupation of a proud and an indolent people: indeed, it may almost be defined, a state of irregular excitement and inaction; and, probably, from this condition of the mind may be traced the honorable idea which is attached to the business of war. Idleness has been, in all ages, the characteristic of the gentleman and the soldier; and the pride of sentiment, which elevated localities cherish in mountaineers, is favorable both to the indolence of peace and to the excitement of war. With these feelings, how strongly is the impression of every object of the sublime and beautiful imprinted on the youthful mind. The rivers, the lakes, the glens, the rocks, and the mountains, alike attract and rivet the affections: and even the mists, the storms, and the superstitions connected with them, enhance these attachments."

"True," said Miss Ashton, "your remark is correct: it is the same feeling which gives

childhood its buoyancy ;——but, I interrupt you.”

“ On the contrary,” my dear lady, replied I ; “ you honour me by your attention. I fear, however, that my explanation is dilating to a sermon, and will fatigue you.”

“ Far from it ; I feel the most intense interest in every word you utter,” said she, smiling ; I can, occasionally, be as attentive as a judge :—do proceed.

“ Well then,” continued I, “ such impressions made in youth are indelible. In every step of our progress in life, the retrospect affords the highest gratification ; and, when absent from our beloved mountains, we long to renew the enjoyment of those pleasures, the separation from which we never cease to regret. The rude music of the country, a song or a traditionary tale, touches this sympathetic cord of our affections ; in a moment, the recollection of the past awakens with all its busy train of associations ; the desire of returning home takes firm possession of our thoughts ; and, in some instances, so powerful is the influence of these desires on the nervous system and the corporeal frame, that actual disease steals upon us, if the wish of returning home cannot be gratified ; and the consequences are frequently fatal.

“ With regard to my second position, it cannot be denied that the inhabitants of a thinly peopled district, of difficult access, have greater reasons for drawing closer the bonds of amity than those of more peopled countries. The strong character of the friendships of mountaineers is owing, also, in a great measure, to their living in small communities almost resembling families : thence hospitality is the plant of the soil, and is almost as essential to the existence of the Highlander as the heath and the peat of his mountains and bogs. The necessity of union among the scattered families of such pastoral districts for the sake of natural protection, probably gave origin to clanships ; and the bonds which linked the families and the individuals of a clan, all bearing the same name, became indissoluble. The amities thus formed, being cherished through life, the heart of the Highlander has always been powerfully attracted to the spot of his nativity. Such feelings are unknown where friendships are founded upon casual incidents, and loosely cemented.”

“ Your idea of the origin of clanships suggests to me,” said my fair and attentive auditor, “ a question. How do you reconcile the love of liberty, which you affirm is created and fostered among the mountains, with feudal servitude, a

remnant of which still exists in the Highlands ?”

“ Your question, my dear madam,” replied I, “ is a natural one. The servitude in feudal clans, although a species of slavery, is yet an agreeable bondage. The Highlander, who takes arms at the command of his chief, or conforms to his orders in peace, is not like a mercenary alien who serves merely for pay. He considers himself a relation of his chief; he probably bears the same name, he has climbed the same rocks, forded the same rivers, and joined in the same sports with him when young; and he still regards himself as his kinsman. Feudal aristocracy, therefore, is much less *galling* and less opposed to liberty than that of more civilized communities, in which the service is paid in money. In the feudal system, the service resembles that of a son; it is regarded as an act of duty and respect to one who the party thinks is naturally his superior; in more civilized communities, it is an affair of barter: when the service has been paid for, all interest in the hireling ceases. The feudal lord, also, is, in a great measure, dependent on his retainers; and, therefore, he cannot maltreat or neglect them with impunity: on the contrary, the wealthy aristocrat, who pays for the services of his inferiors, considers that his money

clears all scores between him and them ; and, considering that he is bound by no obligation, he carries himself with more haughtiness towards them ; whilst they, on their part, are as indifferent to him as he to them : and thus, contempt and pride prevail on one side ; envy, hatred, and a wish to pull down, operate on the other. 'The consequence of all this is a proud and more overbearing aristocracy, and a more turbulent and unmanageable commonalty, in countries otherwise free, than in feudal states.'

I had scarcely concluded my prosing explanation when we arrived at the loch. The whole party was already in the boat, with the exception of Mr. Mordaunt, who was evidently waiting to hand Caroline Ashton into it. As she gave him her hand, the blood mounted to her face ; and, although the politeness of the Clergyman led him to seat himself beside Miss Standard, yet, I could perceive something more than usually expressive of comfort in his look, from this trifling incident. Sketchly and the Cantab having taken the oars, in a few minutes we landed in a little creek at the base of Ben Venue.

As Mr. Oatlands had promised, we found breakfast prepared for us in the pass, close

to a beautiful cascade, formed by one of the mountain streams.

“ You have never, I presume,” said the Advocate, as he handed Miss Standard to one of the stone seats which he had pitched around the table-cloth spread upon the swarth, “ breakfasted in such a parlour before.”

“ Never,” replied she ; “ but I greatly admire the taste which selected such a spot for our repast.”

The breakfast, to which ample justice was done by all, was greatly relished ; especially a dish of fresh mushrooms which had been gathered by Dugald, and peeled and boiled in their own juice, a mode of cooking this delicious, edible fungus which I strongly recommend to all true gastronomes, as superior to any other.

Having left Dugald and the boatmen, the rear guard of the party, to employ a phrase of the Veteran, in possession of the remnant of our repast, we were led by the Advocate to a little, leafy recess, to rest for a short interval before ascending the mountain, as I had pronounced it hazardous to encounter so much fatigue immediately after our meal. We had scarcely reached the spot, when the attention of

every one was arrested by a lively Spanish air on the flute, played evidently at no great distance.

“ I shall see who this musician is,” said Mr. Oatlands, as he quickly sprung from the ground, and proceeded towards a rock in the direction of the music. The air and the style of the music was not new to me : it was, in fact, the same which had excited my surprise in the night ; but, as Mr. Mordaunt was at my side, my curiosity was greatly raised to see the performer ; I therefore followed Mr. Oatlands closely ; and, on looking down from the summit of the rock, which we had ascended, we perceived three men seated at its base. Two of this party were habited as Highlanders : the third, who was the flute-player, was a tall, dignified looking man, seemingly on the verge of fifty, with a plaid thrown around him in the graceful folds of the Roman toga. We could not see his face, owing to a large, slouched, Spanish hat, which he wore, shading it in the direction whence we looked at him. He held the flute in his hand ; and, resting upon the rock beside him, was a basket-hilted Highland sword, or claymore ; and, at his feet, lay a noble Spanish hound, which started up, and seemed uneasy, as if suspicious of the approach of strangers.

“ Down, Carlo ! down ! ” said his master ; “ you prick up your ears, old boy—what has alarmed you ? there are no guerillas here.”

“ He snuffs the wind of a red-deer among the brakes, perchance ”—said one of the Highland gentlemen.

“ He would display no alarm in that case,” added the other : “ some one must be near.”

“ And were it so,” said the first speaker, laying his hand on the sword near him, “ what then ? Tell me, Mr. Mackenzie, what is your opinion of the position in which we are placed, should our scheme not succeed ? ”

“ Why,” replied the person addressed, who, from his language, was apparently a Scotch lawyer—“ if what you say be correct, the act cannot be illegal : no caveat put in by the opposite party could stand—their appeal would fall to the ground, seeing that we have a right to claim restitution of authority—the lords would refuse an inhibition : but, if you are on the wrong scent, then we shall find a snug birth in the Heart of Mid Lothian, and your neck, maybe, will feel the pressure of a hempen collar.”

“ I will risk it,” rejoined the tall man, rising, and drawing up his whole figure ; “ I would risk my salvation for it.”

“ Well ! well ! ” said the other Highland

gentleman, "let us change the subject;" and he remarked that the air which we had heard was extremely beautiful.

"Yes," replied the flute-player, "it is my greatest favorite: you know it well, Captain Mac Alister; you have heard it on the Peninsula from the very lips that first sung it to me:" and he breathed a deep sigh.

"Come, come, my good friend! let us have no relapse into your melancholy mood: we have no such music amongst our hills."

"Yet," said the first speaker, "your national music pleases me; and the more so as the words and the air generally accord admirably. Your plaintive music, however, is better than your lively airs. Do sing me, again, the ballad of the Chieftain's daughter, which delighted me so much yesterday in the dell, between the lakes."

"It is too melancholy for your present mood," said Mac Alister.

"Not at all; I am in a melancholy mood, and you must humour me," was the reply.

Captain Mac Alister requested the use of the flute to aid him to give the proper pitch to his voice; it would not do. "I cannot indeed sing to-day," said he, returning the instrument; "but I will recite to you some lines of a friend of mine, composed in this very spot." He

then looked cautiously around him, as the dog seemed still uneasy and starting, and recited the following stanzas in a manly, clear voice :

The morning rose without a cloud
 On heaven's ethereal blue ;
 The fleecy mists that faintly shroud
 The brow of Ben Venue
 Were melting in the liquid air,
 Like the vows of faithless man,
 Sworn to some fond, confiding fair,
 Who pauses not to scan
 The truth of vows ;—for love is blind,
 And unsuspecting woman's mind.

The dew was glist'ning on the thorn,
 And hung with gems the heath'ry brae ;
 The wild bee wound his tiny horn,
 While, pois'd upon the limber spray
 Of graceful drooping birch, her song
 The linnet trill'd :—a matin lay,
 High over head, with quaver long,
 Caroll'd the lark in air mid-way ;
 And the murmuring runnels o'er their bed
 In many a playful ripple sped.

Why leaves the maiden her downy bed
 To brave the mountain air ?
 Why lifts she now her pillow'd head ?
 Is she oppress'd with care ?
 Or does she, like the timorous hind,
 So onward speed, and haste
 Some fond expected step to find
 Amid the dewy waste ?
 —Nor star, nor compass, lovers need
 Their bark to guide, their steps to speed.

No love the maiden's bosom heaves

With sighs in stifled moan ;

As autumn's widely scatter'd leaves

Speak of the summer gone ;

Tell of affection now no more,

Of plighted faith flown by,

Like the broken wave upon the shore,

Or the rack in the evening sky :

Her sparkling eye is glistening bright,

Her look is joy, and her step is light.

Yet, who can tell ?—Within that breast,

That pure and hallow'd cell

Of a heart, where grief should never rest,

Some latent woes may dwell :

For grief may lurk in the throbbing heart

That is pure as the mountain stream ;

And tears from the fount of eyes depart

That are bright as the morning beam ;

And the bosom may seem as light as air,

Yet misery find a dwelling there !

The maiden sought not the heath'ry brae,

Love's steps to trace amid the dew ;

Nor burst through the birchen groves her way

To the hour of trysting true ;

The arm of an eilden man sustain'd

Her feet upon the height ;

And he smil'd as if her words enchain'd

His ear with fond delight ;

He watch'd her steps with a parent's eye,

And she clung to his side when danger was nigh.

Onward they trod, like pilgrims twain,

And often rais'd the eye,

Where the rugged head of high Binn

Points tow'ring to the sky ;

Or, where some grey, fantastic rock,
 Parting the leafy screen
 Of weeping birch and gnarled oak,
 Starts forward to be seen ;
 And, dropping lovely o'er its face,
 The wild rose finds a resting place.

The rose perfumes the summer air
 That kisses its buds in passing by :
 It dies ; but the grey rock still is there,
 And other rose-buds charin the eye :
 But the arm that props the tim'rous maid,
 The side to which she clings,
 Shall long in the silent grave be laid,
 While she hails other springs ;
 And finds another arm to guide
 Her steps upon the mountain's side.

The musician heaved a deep sigh. His head which had rested upon his hand during the recital, was now suddenly raised ; for the dog was not only restive, but began to growl, and his master grasped his sword.

“ It is time for us to be off,” whispered the Advocate ; and, as I thought so too, we hastily rejoined our party.

“ What a singular group !” said the Advocate, as he finished his account to the ladies of what we had observed : “ there was both pathos in the music, and feeling in the recitation.”

“ I should like to have heard it,” said Caroline Ashton, looking at her cousin, with an expression which seemed to imply something un-

derstood between them. Mr. Mordaunt said nothing ; but, after the party moved on, he lingered behind, and I saw him climb the rock where we had stood : but he left it immediately, and, on joining us again, he informed the Advocate that he had seen nobody.

“ ‘They will probably come again within the range of our eye,’ ” said Mr. Oatlands, “ as we ascend. We shall have many resting points, Miss Caroline, and then we can make our observations.”

From the circuitous and steep nature of the path, our progress was slow ; and the Advocate seemed resolved to lead the Cantab into as many dangers as possible, by daring him to follow him. The rest kept the beaten track, still winding among the close scenery of woods and rocks, with now and then an opening, which afforded views of the Trosachs and the lake of the wildest and most romantic character. I was astonished at the intrepidity and perseverance of the ladies, as our path often lay along the ledge of precipices, with scarcely a footing, where the body was supported only by catching hold of the birches and other shrubs which shot out from the face of the rocks : whilst the depth of the intervening hollows, the broken rocks, and the shattered trees ar-

rested in the fissures of the tremendous cliffs, made it truly fearful to look below. At length, emerging from this wilderness of wooded crags, we reached the naked face of the mountain; and, continuing our toilsome ascent, after many a pause, we mastered every difficulty and gained the summit. I believe that we were all disappointed: the wild scenery of the Trosachs, and the extremity of Loch Cateran, which we expected to look down upon, were hidden from our sight; and, like every view from the tops of mountains, the height greatly lessened the interest of the scene. The eye, indeed, ranged over an immense track of rich and beautiful country: the Clyde on one hand, and the Firth on the other, could be traced afar through their winding course, yet, the whole was too map-like to please.

“I told you,” said Mr. Sketchly, addressing himself to the Advocate, “that the view which you painted in such brilliant colours to the ladies, would not recompense the toil: nothing at such an elevation is picturesque.” -

“Sketchly!” replied his facetious friend—
 “have you gained the use of your tongue? that unruly member to many, but useless organ to thee, merely to give vent to the peccant humours which thy taciturnity has smouldered

so long: thou shalt be denounced ;” and, climbing up the face of a rock which rose above the spot where the party now rested, he proceeded to execute his threat.

“ At length,” said Mr. Mordaunt, addressing Caroline Ashton, “ you will have a specimen of my eccentric friend’s rhetorical powers.”

He had already ascended about forty feet from the base of the precipice, and advanced to a jutting point, where, fearlessly placing himself erect in the attitude of a graceful orator, with the left arm as if holding the drapery of a gown, and the right stretched out and raised before him, he thus reproved the discontent of his friend the artist.

“ Stand forth, thou disturber of the enjoyments of thy neighbour ; thou cherisher of dis-tempered sensibility and ill-regulated imagination ; thou proselyte to the deceitful suggestions of ambition and vanity ; thou sacrificer of the duties and comforts of life to romantic hopes and expectations ; thou dauber of colours, who dares to fancy that the grand, the magnificent, the sublime of Nature, can be bounded by the limits of thy paltry canvass—stand forth, I say, and let me develope to thy contracted understanding the sources of that enjoyment which this capa-

cious scene inspires ; impress upon thy mind noble and expanded conceptions ; and lead thee beyond the narrow scope of thy feeble genius to the contemplation of the immense and infinite.”

At this point of his rhapsody, the Advocate suddenly paused ; and, calling to Mr. Mor-daunt, he directed his eye to the opposite side of the loch. The three men and the dog, whom we had seen at the base of the rock, were observed slowly wending up the mountain, whilst the tallest of them frequently stopped, and seemed to reconnoitre our party through a telescope. At length they disappeared amongst the trees, and we commenced our descent.

We had scarcely arrived within sight of the cove in which we had left the boat, when I observed Dugald advancing to meet me as fast as his lame knee admitted. He put the back of his hand, in true military form, to his forehead, and, coming close up to me, said in a whisper, “ may I speak to ye’re honour in private ? ” As the honest creature’s countenance was evidently labouring with something which seemed to oppress him, I fell back from the rest of the party, and begged him to inform me what he had to communicate. He told me that three

persons, one of whom was dressed somewhat like a Spaniard, and whose face he had seen before, but he could not recollect where, had closely questioned him and the boatmen respecting the names of our party.

“ They gat naething out o’ me,” said Dugald, taking off his bonnet, and stroking down his grey locks as he spoke : “ a highlandman, ye’re honour kens, ne’er speaks when he should nae speak : she merely tauld him that she was ye’re honour, Dr. Mc. Alpin’s servant, and wad be proud to carry her commands. She thought she looked astounded when she mentioned ye’re honour’s name, and she speared how lang it was syne ye came to the Hiellands ; but she did nae tell her : did she nae do richt, an please ye’re honour ?”

I could not deny my approbation to Dugald.

“ Ye’re honour kens I had nae orders to expose ye’re honour’s movements to any one : and she thought the questions o’er closely pushed ; so she said naething : and then the Spanish shentleman went to the boatman. That man,” said Dugald, again touching his bonnet and speaking in a whisper, “ is nae to be trusted ; she walked aff wi’ the Spaniard in a close confab, and then ferried the hale set o’er the loch, although it was nae her boat, as ye’re honour kens, for the time being.”

I enquired if the boatman had informed him what the Spanish gentleman had said to him.

“ Well a wat—na,” replied Dugald—“ feint a thing wad she say : I dinna fancy her at all.”

Trifling as Dugald’s communication was, it tended to confirm the opinions which the circumstances of yesterday had awakened in my mind ; but, as no farther information could be acquired at this time, I thanked Dugald for his caution and integrity, and joined the party. I intended to cross question the boatman when we landed ; but the moment this was effected, he pushed off, and thus defeated my purpose.

“ She kens whare she is ganging,” said Dugald, giving me a significant look, as he took up the cloaks and proceeded to follow us up the glen.

“ I have a strong desire,” said Mr. Oatlands, “ to discover who this singular musician is : suppose, Doctor ! we come down to the loch towards the close of the evening ; the boatman has informed me that the same music has lately been heard upon the lake at night.”

I agreed to this proposal, and Mr. Mordaunt, having heard it, begged to be admitted to accompany us.

“ We shall be glad of your company,” replied the Advocate, “ provided the ladies can

spare you ;” and, throwing a glance at Caroline Ashton who seemed not to have heard the remark, we proceeded up the glen.

As we passed along, the beautiful birch which covered the face of the rocks attracted the attention of the ladies : the Advocate explained to them the importance of this tree to the Highlander.

“ It is to the Celt,” said he, “ what the cocoa-nut is to the Hindoo : it forms the rafters and the wattled door of his cabin ; his spade, his plough, his cart, his harness ; even his cordage is composed of twisted birch.”

Miss Standard remarked that she was surprised it was not more cultivated than it is in the south.

“ It will grow any where,” replied Mr. Oatlands ; “ but, like the hardy race to which it is so valuable, it loses, when transplanted to a richer soil, that character which distinguishes it on the craggy face of its native mountains.”

Caroline Ashton, who was regarding a beautiful specimen of it, the feathery twigs of which were hanging over the rocks under which the party for a moment halted, remarked that it was a more elegant tree than the hawthorn of the English common.

“ Yes,” said Mr. Mordaunt ; “ but the

hawthorn has an interest from local and peculiar circumstances which the birch does not possess : it is the first tree that we are acquainted with in infancy ; it is the play-fellow of our boyish days ; it is the trysting tree of rustic lovers ; and when, after long absence, we return again to our native village, when all is altered, roads, houses, and other trees are grown out of our knowledge, when no recognized face meets us either to welcome our return or to receive our greeting, the old thorn on the common remains as we left it ; the same twisted and gnarled trunk ; not a branch, scarcely a twig altered ; the same tree we had pictured in memory, the sole survivor of those early joys, the recollection of which had upheld the wanderer amid all his struggles, and at length turned his footsteps homeward, to feel that disappointment amidst which it forms the sole consolation."

In the middle of the glen, the ladies were startled by the sudden appearance of the Spanish hound. The dog stopped for a few seconds, looked at the party, and wagged his tail, on the Advocate calling " Carlo ! Carlo !" We expected to see his master follow him : no person, however, appeared ; but a shrill whistle was soon heard ; when the animal, pricking up

his ears, bounded back in the direction whence he came.

“ I will follow him,” said the Advocate, “ if any two of you will join me ; for three-armed men and a dog are too great odds against one man unarmed.”

“ I will !” said the Cantab, with a readiness creditable to his courage.

“ And I,” added Mr. Mordaunt, “ if Mr. Sketchly will give his arm to Miss Standard.”

“ Nay, that you shall not, Mordaunt !” rejoined the Advocate, who, with his usual tact, had observed a paleness overspread the face of Caroline Ashton, as the Clergyman uttered his intention ; “ your cloth, and the charge of the ladies confided to you and the Doctor, forbid us permitting either of you to do so. No, no !—Sketchly, Percival, and I, shall endeavour to get a sight of this musician.”

As Mr. Mordaunt had evidently observed the change in the countenance of Miss Ashton, he did not stir. I also remained with the ladies, and endeavoured to convince my fair companion that no harm could result, even should the parties meet ; for nothing could occur to rouse any angry feelings on either side.

The attempt to follow the dog, however, proved abortive ; for the animal was quickly

lost among the fern, juniper, and arbutus, which covered the ground : neither his master nor his companions were visible.

“ This flute-player,” said the Advocate, as the three gentlemen returned, “ is a magician : he has the power of making himself invisible ; that whistle was close at hand, and yet not a soul can be seen. I am determined, however,” continued he, “ not only to see, but to speak to him, if he be a mortal. I shall walk down to-night ; and perchance get a glimpse of the musician.”

“ I am equally anxious to encounter him,” said Mr. Mordaunt ; “ I shall, therefore, accompany you, Oatlands, in the evening.”

Neither Miss Standard nor her cousin, although their looks indicated some suspicion of risk in this adventure, said anything to divert the gentlemen from their determination to discover the mysterious being who had excited so much speculation in the party ; and who, it was supposed, was the same person that had alarmed Miss Ashton at Killin.

The fatigue of the ascent, and the lateness of the hour, made dinner most welcome ; the conversation turned upon the three strangers, and especially the apparent Spaniard. The curiosity of the Veteran was roused, and he

resolved to accompany the party to the loch in the evening.

The moon rose majestically ; her full orb, in the dark concave of the unclouded heavens, shed the softest light upon the craggy front of Binean, and tipped with silver and ivory the summits of every tufted knoll in the glen ; whilst the steep brow of Ben Venue was shrouded in the deepest shadow. I should say, to those who have never been there, that no language can convey an idea of the impression of placid and peaceful serenity, mingled with a sentiment of awe, which the mind receives from the influence of moonlight in the 'Trosachs. The silence which the party imposed upon itself, broken only by the sound of our footsteps, and the gurgle of the runnels, greatly added to this effect. In the deepest part of the glen, where the road curves around the base of a huge fragment of rock, and is skirted on the other side by a jungle of wood rising upon the base of Ben Venue, a crashing among the bushes halted the party for a moment ; it was, however, only a long-bearded, white goat ; which, alarmed by the uncommon appearance of human visitors in the pass at that hour, burst his way through the thicket ; and, reaching the apex of a rock which towered above

the dark sea of pines amidst which it rose, shewed himself between us and the moon, as if purposely to enhance the picturesque features of the scene. When we reached the loch, all was stillness there: no boat lay in the little creek, which was now obscured in the deepest night by the shadow of the mountain, which, stretching half across the loch, obliterated the outline between the land and the water; whilst a stream of dazzling light, reflected from its unruffled mirror on the north side, served, by contrast, to deepen still more the obscurity of the south. As we slowly walked along the northern shore, and had just gained the summit of a rock which commanded a large expanse of the loch, the notes of the expected flute arrested our attention. The air was one of those soft and amorous sonatas which are often heard floating on the evening breeze over the Lake of Como. The boat, whence it proceeded, with an almost imperceptible movement, the oars being merely dipped in the water, was at this moment gliding across the stream of light. The skill and taste of the musician was of the first order; and, when he concluded, we could distinctly hear the compliments paid to him by those in the boat.

“Donald,” said one of the party, “put this

handkerchief under your oar : I must not lose a note of the airs which the Colonel so kindly favours us with. Let the next, my dear friend, be a Spanish one, full of warmth and pathos."

"Do not ask me for any thing pathetic to-night, my dear fellow," replied the musician ; " my heart is too much oppressed by the reality of grief, to relish its fiction. I have often told you that we are more the creatures of instinct than the pride of reason will permit us to acknowledge. I feel a load upon my breast, which portends no good, and poisons all the moments which I would give to enjoyment : assist me to shake it off, not to nourish it."

"You are a singular compound," rejoined the person addressed. "Who would believe that you are capable of doing what you contemplate !"

"Taunt me not, my friend," again replied the musician ; " your bosom never felt such love as mine has cherished, nor ever knew such grief as has rooted out all its benevolent affections. I owe the world nothing."

"Yet, if you fail, my brave friend ! it will charge you with a serious debt."

"Leave the subject, and be hanged to ye !" said the third person ; " 'tis time enough to be damned when ye are gone to the infernals, without being first roasted in purgatory."

“ That is a coarse remark,” rejoined the second speaker, “ and deserves no reply.”

“ Reply, or no reply, ’tis nevertheless true. The Colonel knows well what he is about ; and, if Donald can be trusted, failure is out of the question. What say ye, old Charon ?”

“ What for nae trust me ?” was the reply of the well-known boatman. “ ’Tis no a matter o’ law, Mr. Mackenzie ! Do ye opine, sir, that Hielanders are like Edinbro’ writers ?”

“ Ye’re an impudent scoundrel, Donald ! and were ye not wanted for another purpose, I would tumble ye into the loch,” retorted the person addressed by Donald : “ ye’re an impudent scoundrel !”

“ I command both of you,” interposed the musician, “ to be silent !” and immediately he struck up a beautiful, lively, Tyrolese air.

“ I am certain,” whispered the Advocate, “ that I know the voice of the person who spoke to the boatmen. He is a Writer to the Signet, a Solicitor, in Edinburgh ; a coarse, vulgar-minded man, capable of any rascally transaction that can fill his purse.”

“ Speak lower, Oatlands !” said Mr. Mor-daunt ; “ the boat is approaching the shore—the party will land immediately below us.”

The music suddenly ceased ; and the words “ wheest, wheest,” was heard in the subdued

voice of Donald, the boatman, who thus proceeded.

“Trusted, or nae trusted—I’ll shew ye, Mr. Mackenzie, that the word o’ Donald Cameron is as guid as his bond, war it drawn up in ye’re ain office. I see something, howsomever, atween me and the moon, on the top o’ that rock, that says we must nae land there; she’ll stand o’er to the other side:” and in a moment, with a few strokes of the oars, the boat shot across the loch, and was lost in the obscurity of the opposite side; but we heard the oars laid on the seats as the party landed.

“By Gad!” said the Veteran, who, until now, had remained a silent spectator of what was passing, “some mischief is in view; we are a strong body; can we not go and meet the conspirators face to face? We ought to know who the perpetrators of the evil are, should any happen.”

“You forget, my dear Sir!” said the Advocate, “that we must ford the Teith before we can get to them; and, were this not the case, take my word for it, they will not wait our arrival: all that we can do is to extend our enquiries to-morrow, and watch their movements.”

“I believe you are right,” rejoined the

Colonel ; “ and, therefore, let us now return to the inn.”

In my mind, every circumstance that had happened, only involved the matter in deeper mystery. My suspicions of one of the party were still unaltered ; yet, I could not reconcile, with his appearance here, any object that could explain his conduct. The endeavour to account for it in the only way which probability admitted, would not explain his attack upon Miss Ashton ; but, as I was well aware of his libertinism, I dreaded to think upon the consequences, should he succeed in gaining possession of that young lady’s person ; and, consequently, I determined to prevent it, at any risk, even to my personal safety. There was every reason for supposing that the party, which had landed on the opposite side, would recross the lake, in order to proceed up the glen ; and, should I remain near the landing place, there was a chance of the correctness of my conjectures, respecting at least one of the party, being ascertained. I fell back, therefore, unobserved from my companions, and sat down at the base of a rock, which crowns a small elevation, looking directly across the lake ; so that I might be able to observe the boat, as soon as it should be visible, after leaving the opposite shore.

As the moon rose, the broad shadow of the mountain gradually lessened ; but still the outline between its base and the water was indistinct ; and the cliffs and precipices and dark masses of wood and ravines upon its ever-varied acclivity, were involved in the deepest obscurity. By degrees, the voices of my companions died away in the distance, and I found myself alone. The darkness of night was spread only partially over the grandeur of the scene, and its ruggedness elsewhere only smoothed down, but still faintly visible in the hazy softness of the moonlight, so that its spell over the imagination was scarcely weakened. For a short time, my attention was riveted to the spot, completely concealed in the shadow of the mountain, where the boat lay. I listened eagerly to catch the first sounds of the re-embarkation ; but all was silence : so still, indeed, was the air, that the limberest twigs of the birch hung immoveable ; not a leaf turned ; not a breath ruffled the smooth mirror of the loch, glistening in the placid beams which slept upon its bosom. I soon became sensitive to the intensity of the stillness ; the beatings of my heart were audible ; and I held my breath to be assured of the fact. At length, the sublime impression of

awe which fell upon me produced a feeling approaching to that of desolation: the first time in my life a supernatural dread came over me; and I hastily rose to depart. At this moment, the screech of an owl, which flew across the lake, startled me even to trembling; it ceased; and again all was the most profound silence.

I had often heard of the sublimity of excessive silence, but had never before experienced its influence. I had listened, unmoved, to the roar of the cannon in the conflict of armies; to the denouncing rushing of the tropical whirlwind; and to the crash of the thunder peal, amid the startled echoes of the Alps; but the feeling which they impressed was feeble, compared with the overpowering awe with which the dread stillness of this moment unmanned my nerves. 'Twas

“ as the gen’ral pulse
Of life stood still, and nature made a pause*.”

What an inexplicable part of our being is mind! A few minutes before the feeling which I have just described arose, the sole object of my thoughts was the discovery of the mysterious individual who had so strongly excited

my curiosity. I had lingered behind my companions to satisfy myself upon this point ; and yet an impression, purely incidental, warming the imagination to poetical sublimity, had awakened such solemn thoughts as obliterated every other sentiment in my mind ; and I hastened to escape from the intensity of my feelings, completely forgetful of the object which had placed me in the situation productive of the dream which had thus passed over me. I was conscious of a feeling which seemed to place me as a spectator of the boundless universe, and which overwhelmed me with the idea of immensity.

As I walked up the glen, with my mind filled with these reflections, I was suddenly roused from the reverie by the halloo of the Advocate and Mr. Mordaunt, who had kindly returned to meet me ; and I was truly glad of their company.

From the conversation which ensued, it was evident that Mr. Mordaunt's suspicions of the person, who had excited so much speculation, were not dissimilar to my own ; but I could not divine how he should be acquainted with that person. Why I did not question him upon the subject is one of those inexplicable points in my character which I have never

been able to explain or to overcome. I have always chosen rather to continue to suspect, or to doubt, and to reason upon the probability of conjectures, than to attempt to verify my notions by a single query. I did not hint my suspicions to Mr. Mordaunt, nor question him respecting his ; and we arrived at the inn as much strangers to each other's thoughts, on a matter so interesting to both, as the first moment when we met.

On entering the little parlour, I found that the ladies had already retired ; the Veteran was lounging, with his limbs stretched out before him, and his eyes turned up to the ceiling, in a meditative mood, finishing a cigar which he was smoking to refresh himself after his evening ramble ; whilst Mr. Sketchly and the Cantab were debating about the probable physiognomy and personal appearance of the mysterious stranger who had displayed so much good taste and skill in his musical performances. The Advocate and Mr. Mordaunt joined the conversation ; but, as I was eager to record my feelings upon the events of the day, and bring up my diary to this point, I took up my candle and retired to my apartment.

Dugald had already placed my writing-table close to the fire, and had wished me “ guid

nicht as he retired ;” but he again entered the room, and, coming up to the table, enquired if I wished to be called early in the morning.

“ Why do you enquire, Dugald ?” said I ; for the question was not only unusual, but the manner of asking it, and the expression on the countenance of the good creature, indicated a feeling which he seemed half inclined to explain, if any encouragement were held out to him.

“ If ye want to rest after ye’re lang day’s walk, maybe ye wad hae nae objection that she should gane out ?” Here Dugald paused without finishing the sentence ; and then continued, “ she maun nae say where : but ye’ll no perhaps think it odd should she gang out ?”

“ Not at all, Dugald,” replied I ; “ but why make a mystery of where you are going ?”

The honest creature looked confused : “ she has her thoughts”—was his answer ; and, as if anxious to evade any farther enquiries, he put his hand to his forehead, and left the room.

There was nothing in this transaction calculated to excite surprise ; yet, I could not help, at the moment, reflecting upon the remark of the musician—“ that we are more creatures of instinct than the pride of reason permits us to acknowledge.” The occurrences altogether of the evening seemed to weigh upon my

spirits ; and I could not avoid anticipating, without knowing wherefore, some distressing event. In vain I opened my window, and endeavoured to compose my feelings by looking out upon the face of Nature ; and, after retiring to bed, the dawn of morning fell upon my eyes before the hand of sleep began to press their aching lids, and I sank into repose.

CHAPTER IV.

You turn pale ;
 Let me support you : — paler — ho ! some aid there !
 Some water !

DOGE OF VENICE.

I WAS astonished and annoyed, on awaking, to find that the day was already far advanced. It was ten o'clock ; and, as Dugald had not come near me, I presumed that the honest creature had not returned. I rung the bell ; and, on enquiry, was informed that he had gone out in the morning with the ladies, who had ordered a boat to be early ready to take them down the loch. The Veteran and Mrs. Standard, I was farther informed, had become anxious on account of their long absence ; and the Advocate, with the other gentlemen, was gone to look after them. The presentiment which I had felt last night again rushed upon my mind : the conviction that some misfortune was about to occur, or had already happened,

was overpowering. I therefore dressed hastily, and hurried down stairs. I found the Veteran, Miss Bridget, and Mrs. Standard, in the little parlour. The old man was walking to and fro, with an anxious, agitated look; whilst Mrs. Standard was sitting at the breakfast table, leaning her forehead upon her hand, in the same condition of mind as the Colonel; and Miss Bridget gazing out at the window.

“Here we are in a most distressing state of suspense, Doctor,” said the Veteran, as I entered: “the girls went out this morning, at five o’clock, and are not yet returned. By Gad! women are headstrong to a degree! Since the attack on Caroline, at Killin, they had my orders never to venture out alone; yet they are gone, and nobody knows where.”

“My dear Augustus!” said Miss Bridget, “they are not alone:—your servant, Doctor, went with them.”

“A poor, lame, old man!—a very able protector, by Gad!” rejoined the Veteran.

If Dugald is with them,” said I, wishing to comfort Mrs. Standard, “they are safe enough: I can trust his integrity; and although old, yet he has the heart of a lion.”

Mrs. Standard raised her head, and seemed consoled with my remark; but her counte-

nance betrayed the uneasiness of her mind: and, suspecting that my own was as likely to indicate my apprehensions for the safety of the young ladies, I enquired which way the other party had gone; and, being told that they had proceeded down the Trosachs, I proposed to go in the opposite direction, and immediately left the room.

My conjectures were different from any which probably were entertained either by the Veteran or our other friends. I had no dread of an accident having happened on the water; as the morning was unusually calm: but my thoughts reverted to the suspicious character of the strangers who had so much excited our attention, and the conversation which I had overheard at the foot of the rock yesterday. My reliance on Dugald, however, was great; and therefore I had no doubt, if abduction had been attempted, that we should be able to rescue the parties and chastise the miscreants.

I had proceeded only a very short distance along the margin of Loch Achray, on the road to Callander, when I observed a boat nearing the shore, rowed by the Cantab, with Miss Standard in it, supported by Mr. Sketchly. I hastened to the beach, and assisted in handing her from the boat.

“ Oh, Doctor !” she exclaimed, gazing wildly upon me,—“ Caroline is—” But, before she could finish the sentence, she fainted, and I caught her as she fell.

The Cantab now, in a few words, informed me, that, having gone out, with the Advocate and Mr. Mordaunt, to look for the young ladies, he and Sketchly had taken the road along the side of Loch Achray, whilst the two others had proceeded down the Trosachs. “ We had not gone far,” continued he, “ when we observed a female on the opposite side, waving a handkerchief: but, as there was only one, we were doubtful whether it was either of our ladies. We, however, hurried round the upper end of the loch—a most fearful road,—and, having crossed the Teith, where it enters the loch, by a decayed Alpine bridge, formed of little more than two trunks of pine, which scarcely bore our weight over the roaring torrent, we found that the person whom we had descried was really Miss Standard. She ran towards us as we approached; but no sooner did we meet than she fainted; and she has continued passing from one fainting fit to another until this moment. We, of course, know nothing of Miss Ashton, nor even of what has occurred: but we saw this boat close to the spot where we discovered Miss

Standard. It was impossible to recross the bridge with one in so helpless a condition as this poor lady. In truth, my dear Doctor, I reflect with amazement that we had courage to cross it ourselves!—it is just where the river issues from among the rocks, which, frowning above, with the frightful torrent below, render it a place sufficient to try any man's courage. I must have both Sketchly's head and my own examined when we get to Edinburgh."

"Never mind either your own head or mine at present," said Mr. Sketchly, who seemed deeply interested in the state of Miss Standard.

"Well," replied the Cantab, "to cut the story short, "we carried her into the boat, and rowed her across, as you have witnessed."

"What is to be done?" said Mr. Sketchly, who was assisting me to support her apparently lifeless body. The Cantab proposed conveying her directly to the inn; but, as the shock to her parents, from seeing her in her present condition, would be most distressing, I suggested the propriety of my preceding them, to prepare the Veteran and Mrs. Standard for the trial which they were destined to undergo. This I performed in the best manner I could. The Veteran hurried to meet his daughter;

and in a few minutes she was laid on the sofa in the parlour; and her mother and Aunt Bridget busied themselves, in applying, under my directions, the proper means for her restoration. It was a considerable time, however, before this was effected; and still longer before the afflicted lady acquired composure sufficient to relate what had occurred. Her recital only tended to overpower Mrs. Standard, who had previously remained wonderfully collected, as long as her exertions were required for the recovery of her daughter. She now sank into a kind of apathetic condition, which the Veteran, afterwards, informed me he dreaded might have ended in the same state of catalepsy which she suffered on the death of her son.

As soon as Miss Standard recovered a sufficient degree of calmness of mind, she gave the following recital of the event which had caused so much consternation and anxiety.

“ You know, my dear father,” said she, “ the custom which Caroline has of speaking to every body: it has gained her many friends; but, in this instance, it has been productive of the misfortune which has fallen upon us. She was fond of chatting with Donald the boatman, and enquiring into all the traditions connected with the surrounding scenery. Last night, before you

and the other gentlemen went down the Tro-sachs, as Caroline and I were walking upon the esplanade together, Donald came up to us, and, taking off his bonnet, began, in his way, to descant on the beauty of many spots along the side of Loch Achray, and told us that the only time to see them to advantage was early in the morning. He concluded by saying that he would row us down the loch any morning at five o'clock, land us at the best points of view, and bring us back before breakfast. 'Ye hae only to tell me the nicht afore, leddies,' said the false man. Caroline, with that haste in deciding which has always been a marked feature in her character, urged me to agree to appoint Donald to have his boat ready this morning, provided the weather was fine. 'How I should like,' said she, 'to astonish the Advocate and our other friends with the account of our expedition, and to prove to them that women are not the helpless beings they imagine! Come, Letty!' the dear girl continued, in her winning manner,—'come now, let us demonstrate our independence.'—'Alas!' continued Miss Standard, bursting into tears, and hiding her face in the bosom of her mother, who sat by her on the sofa, supporting her head,—'I shall never again hear that winning voice!'

“ I endeavoured to persuade Caroline that the expedition would not be altogether free from risk, on account of the suspicious characters which were about ; and that she should not forget the alarm which she had suffered at Killin. ‘ Oh,’ replied she, ‘ I was not much alarmed : I could have extricated myself from the old man ! who, after all, intended, perhaps, only to frighten me. I am sure, Letty, that I have courage for any thing : but, for your sake, suppose we take the Doctor’s servant with us ? I received such a high character of him from his master, that I am certain he will be a safe protection to us.’ I hinted that his lameness would render him but a feeble protector. ‘ Not in the least,’ did the dear girl reply ; ‘ the Doctor informs me that he has the heart of a lion : now, therefore, dear Letty ! do say that we may go down the loch to-morrow morning.’

“ You know,” continued Miss Standard, again appealing to her father, “ that I never could deny Carry any thing ; and you know, also, that, with all the delicacy and gentleness of her nature, she never swerved from urging accordance with any object that she had in view, until it was acceded to : and I, at length, in an evil moment, agreed to her proposal. She clung round my neck and kissed me.

‘ You are so kind, Letty !’ said she,—‘ I cannot love you enough ; but if you really think it improper to trust ourselves with Dugald, I will at once give up my wishes to your judgment ; but I do long to see the loch at that early hour.’ You may readily imagine that I would not consent to this proposal. Donald was therefore ordered to be in readiness at five o’clock this morning ; and Dugald consented to accompany us, if his master did not require his services.

“ The morning was beautiful : Caroline and I anticipated the hour : we were on the esplanade before Dugald shewed himself. We found the boat lying in the little creek in front of the inn ; and, in ten minutes afterwards, Donald came down, with a bundle under his arm. ‘ She has got a wheen things for a frien down the loch,’ said the false man, as he tossed the bundle into the boat.

A few children, belonging to the cottages at the back of the inn, were amusing themselves by wading in the water close to the boat. ‘ Gang awa, bairns !’ said Donald ; but their merry faces, their sprightly air, and the little amusing tricks which they were playing off against one another, so much interested Caroline, that she proposed to take two of the little girls into the boat with us ; but Donald objected : we therefore stepped

into it, and were instantly pushed off without them. The boatman seemed anxious that Dugald also should be left behind; but to this I could not consent, and consequently he was admitted into the boat.

“ The soft air of the morning, the gentle gliding of the boat, the beauty and romantic character of the shore, alternately rocky and covered with trees, and the songs of the birds at this early hour, gave a charm to the first part of our progress down the loch which was strongly felt by both of us.

“ ‘ How truly delightful this period of the day is, Letty!’ said my dear cousin; ‘ who would lose the heart-inspiring impulse which it bestows, for an hour or two of sleep? It leads the mind to pour forth its gratitude to the Supreme Author of this magnificent scene, not only for the enjoyment which it bestows, but for the pure sentiment of benevolence and universal love which it inspires!’

“ She had scarcely concluded these remarks, when Donald turned the boat, which he had all along kept close to the shore, into a little cove, where a mountain stream empties itself into the loch, after passing round the base of a mass of rock, rising from a small plat of gravel; and which is half concealed by a mass of trees.

“ ‘ She would shew the leddies a waterfa

here,' said the designing man, and, stepping from the boat, he offered his hand to assist Caroline in landing. Her feet were no sooner on the plat of gravel, however, than he again jumped into the boat and pushed it from the shore. I was so astonished at this movement, that, for a few minutes, I was unable to speak : at length I exclaimed, ' Donald ! what are you about ?—you do not mean to leave my cousin there ?—I insist that you immediately take her again into the boat, or put me also ashore.'

" ' Put back the boat, ye loun, instantly !' said Dugald, seizing one of the oars ; when a scuffle ensued, and the good, honest creature was thrown into the water. Donald immediately pushed farther off from the shore ; and it was now evident that his intention was to separate me from Caroline, who screamed aloud when poor Dugald fell into the water.

" ' I command you, Donald,' said I, ' to put me ashore ! you shall feel the severity of my father's resentment, if you do not, whatever may be your motive for separating me from my cousin.'

" The deceitful wretch only grinned at my remark ; and, in his broken English, assured me that a hair of my head should not be injured.

" ' Turn in the boat, Donald !' I repeated,—

‘at least, to save the drowning man. Have you no compassion?—no mercy?’

“His only reply was, that Loch Achray would not drown a Highlander! By this time I was rejoiced to see poor Dugald rise on the water. Caroline nobly stepped forward into it to lay hold of him: but, conceive my consternation, when, at this moment, I perceived three men rush from behind the rock, and one of them seize Caroline round the waist, and, raising her from the ground, carry her out of sight. My limbs trembled under me; and, if I had not formed a resolution to endeavour, at any risk, to wrest the oar from the hands of Donald, and try to push in the boat, that I might land for her assistance, my energy would have given way, and I should have instantly dropped. Two of the men remained behind, and endeavoured to prevent Dugald, who by this time had regained his legs, from reaching the shore; but the courageous creature, lifting the oar which he had carried over with him, when he tumbled into the water, felled one of them to the ground, and the other ran off. Dugald stepped on the bank, and instantly disappeared; and Donald then pushed in the boat, jumped ashore, and also disappeared behind the rock. I hesitated for an instant what to do; but, my reso-

lution being roused, I stepped out of the boat, over the body of the apparently dead man, and, running round the rock, discovered a path which led to the carriage road on the side of the loch. How can I tell you what met my eyes on getting upon the road?" said the afflicted lady, shading her face with her hands, and sobbing aloud.

"Be composed, my dear Letitia," said the Veteran; "and, for God's sake, proceed!"

"Not far from this path, a carriage and four horses stood upon the road; and into it the man who carried off Caroline was forcing her. The dear girl resisted by every means in her power, whilst Dugald was fixed like a tiger upon the left arm of the man, beating him severely with his free fist. The villain did not seem to feel it: but, the moment Caroline was forced into the carriage, which was accomplished the instant I appeared in sight,—for, holding out her arms towards me, she fainted, and all further resistance was at an end,—he turned round and shook off Dugald as if he had been an infant. The poor old man staggered back for a few paces, then fell, and rolled over the precipice. The noise of his fall, and his groans, will never leave my ears: I fainted, and was insensible to every thing else that passed, until

I found myself near the opposite side of the lake, in the boat with Donald and the person whom Dugald felled with the oar, and who, it seems, was only severely stunned.

“ I again fainted, on finding myself thus situated ; and in this condition I was lifted out of the boat : for, on recovering, I found myself seated on the grass, supported by the person who crossed with me in it. I must do him the justice to say that he behaved with much humanity, and assured me that he deeply lamented the result of the transaction in which he had borne a part ; that it was not the intention of the parties concerned to injure any one ; and that the fate of Dugald, who, he feared, was dangerously hurt, was unpremeditated and purely accidental.

“ ‘ Believe me, madam,’ said he, ‘ however extraordinary the assertion may appear, that your cousin is in no danger of the smallest insult ; the individual, with whom she now is, has more interest in protecting her honour than you imagine.’

“ I beseeched him to inform me who he was, and where he intended to convey Caroline.

“ ‘ On these points,’ he replied, ‘ I am bound to secrecy at present. With regard to yourself, madam, I regret that I cannot conduct

you to your parents. Present appearances are too much against me, to permit me to meet Colonel Standard ; for whom, however, I have the highest respect. Your friends will doubtless soon be in search of you ; so that I am not afraid of any harm to you in leaving you here alone.’

“ I could not reply to this speech. It was followed by the person who uttered it taking off his bonnet—for he was in the Highland dress—and bidding me good morning : he then hastily ascended the hill, in company with Donald, who took the bundle which he had thrown into the boat under his arm, and both were soon out of sight.

“ The whole of the events which I have related,” continued Miss Standard, “ passed so rapidly, that I could not persuade myself that they were not a dream. When left alone, I reflected for a moment what I should do. My first idea was to enter the boat, and endeavour to cross the loch ; but my ignorance of its management deterred me from that step. I then walked as far as the frightful Alpine bridge over the Teith ; but my courage was not equal to the attempt of its dangerous pathway. I therefore returned to the spot where I was found, and sat down upon the grass to watch

for the appearance of any human being whom I might attract by waving my handkerchief. I think four hours must have elapsed before I perceived Mr. Sketchly and Mr. Percival."

"My poor child!" said Mrs. Standard, "what must have been your thoughts during that time!"

"They were, indeed, my dearest mother, the most afflicting: I was impious enough to blame Providence for having denied to me that foresight which would have enabled me to avert the blow that has fallen upon us, by not complying with the proposition of dear Caroline. I shudder at the thoughts that passed through my mind."

"My dear Letitia!" said the Veteran, wiping away a tear which had started in his eye, "you have no cause to blame yourself. Providence has thrown a veil over every future event of life, undoubtedly for the wisest and the best of purposes. We were perhaps too happy—and too secure of the continuance of that happiness in Carry's affectionate and endearing society. It was well, for our enjoyment of it, that we were ignorant of this impending blow; we could not have relished the blessing as we have done under the foreknowledge of its approaching bereavement. But

this is not the time for moralizing. Doctor !” continued he, addressing me, “ what is to be done ?”

At no time would I so willingly have evaded a question of this kind as at this moment. My anxiety to ascertain the fate of my sincere although humble friend, and invaluable servant, Dugald, was the object nearest to my heart ; yet, the debt of gratitude which I owed to the Veteran, for the numerous kindnesses he had heaped upon me in America, rose in my recollection ; and my duty, as well as mine inclination, urged me immediately to join in the pursuit of the miscreant, whoever he was, that had carried off his niece. The imploring look also of Miss Standard’s fine countenance, beaming with that divinity of expression which speaks far more than language, informed me that every thing was expected from my co-operation. I was considering for a few moments what reply could be offered to my worthy friend’s query, when I was happily relieved from my embarrassment by the entrance of Mr. Mordaunt and the Advocate, who, in their return up the glen, had met the Cantab, and had been informed of what had happened.

The agitation of the Clergyman amounted to distraction : he would have put a thousand

questions to Miss Standard, had he not been prevented by the tact of the Advocate, who saw the injury that renewing the details of the event would inflict on the deeply wounded feelings of Mrs. Standard. She, indeed, appeared in a condition of mind bordering on despair. For a few seconds she would stare with a vacuity of look in the face of any one near her ; then suddenly rise from her seat ; cross over to the opposite side of the room ; and, leaning her head upon her hands, burst into an agony of tears. The Veteran and his excellent daughter never appeared to more advantage than on this distressing occasion. The old man was wholly engrossed in comforting his wife ; and the personal feelings of Miss Standard seemed to have vanished, the moment she found that her mother's situation demanded all the energies of her mind. Mr. Mordaunt grasped the hands of both the old people in his :—for a moment, as if overpowered by his feelings, he seemed to hesitate ; and then, whilst his words almost choked his utterance, he declared, unreservedly, his affection for Miss Ashton, and his determination to rescue her at the hazard of his life ; and to trace the parties, however subtle and sinister, to whatever part of the world they might carry her.

“ I can firmly rely,” said he, “ upon the active assistance of my friend Oatlands.”

“ Most certainly,”—replied that excellent man—“ never was it more ready to be tendered than at this moment.”

Miss Standard again looked at me : it was one of those silent appeals which are irresistible ; it almost said—“ you know the feelings of Mr. Mordaunt for my cousin, and you, perhaps, have guessed her sentiments towards him : is it right that he and one, who, however good and kind, is still a stranger to us, should only undertake this rescue ? are you not the friend of my father ?”

I felt the force of this appeal ; and I, of course, offered my services to accompany the other two gentlemen ; but, as I was about to state reasons for my being unable to join them immediately, Mr. Oatlands rang the bell, and ordered horses instantly for Callander.

“ There is no ae horse i’ the stable the now,” replied the female waiter and maid of all work, who, on this occasion, answered the summons of the bell with unusual alacrity ; “ they were a’ ordered in to Callander late last nicht ; and are no expected hame afore the morn.”

The look of Mr. Mordaunt, at this infor-

mation, was that of utter despair : nor was the countenance of any one present unmarked by astonishment. It was too evident, indeed, that the scheme of the fugitives had been well concerted ; and that every means of immediate pursuit was cut off.

“ Are not my horses there ?” said I.

“ Ou i’, Sir !” again replied Mary ; “ nae doubt yours should be there ; but that’s no the case the now ; for Donald turned them out into the pasture this morning.”

“ Turned them out !” exclaimed the Veteran — “ the conspiracy, indeed, has been well planned ; but, by Gad !” repeating emphatically his oath, “ the scoundrels shall not escape — no ! I will follow them myself to the end of the world ; and think no more of shooting them than if they were dogs.”

The vehemence of the old man roused Mrs. Standard from the lethargy into which she had sunk.

“ My dear Augustus,” said she, regarding him with the most affectionate look, “ you are unequal to such a task : I am sure we may trust to the Doctor and to our good young friend.” And she drew the hand of Mr. Mordaunt, which still held hers, towards her and pressed it to her lips.

“ My dear Mr. Mordaunt !” continued she, “ I have not been an indifferent spectator of the affection which has been awakened in your bosom for my niece, and I know her sentiments towards you : it is to you and to our friend, the Doctor, that we must look to rescue her from the danger which now threatens her.”

The Clergyman kissed the hand of Mrs. Standard, and assured her that he considered it the most sacred duty in which he could be engaged ; and that, with a sincere reliance on the protection of Providence, ever extended to the truly good, and which no doubt would shield Miss Ashton, he had a firm conviction that he should succeed in overtaking the fugitives. The Advocate, who was the most composed person of the party, proposed that some of the peasants should be sent to catch my horses, and that he, Mr. Mordaunt, and myself, should immediately proceed to Callander, where he hoped we should not only obtain some information which might regulate our after pursuit, but also procure fresh horses to aid us in it.

“ If they proceed to Edinburgh,” said he, “ I shall ferret them out from the most obscure corner in which they may shelter themselves :

what do you say to this proposition, Doctor? let us be off instantly. The Colonel and the ladies, and Sketchly and Percival, can follow us the moment that post horses can be sent for them. We must leave our portmanteaux to their care."

"There is assuredly no time to be lost," said I; "but, as far as respects my accompanying you, perhaps you have not heard, my dear Sir! what has happened to my poor servant; and, if even you have heard of his accident, you cannot be supposed capable of appreciating either the worth of that excellent man, or the deep obligation which I owe to his friendship. I cannot leave this place until I have ascertained his fate: I have already too long delayed this duty:—therefore you must leave me here at present.

"You and Mr. Mordaunt can go forward to Edinburgh; I shall join you there with the rest of the party; and then you may command my services for any time, and to whatever distance they may be required. Mr. Sketchly, Mr. Percival, and I, shall walk to the spot where poor Dugald fell, and where perhaps he now lies in severe suffering." In making this remark, I did not perceive any disapprobation

of my plan on the countenance of Miss Standard: and I felt, I know not why, comforted in her acquiescence.

My proposal was no sooner agreed to than it was put in execution: the Advocate and Mr. Mordaunt hastened to prepare for their journey; and, as I was impatient, we left the Veteran and the ladies, and walked along the precipice to which Miss Standard had directed us. It was one of those elevated rocky points, on the high road to Callander, which run along the margin of the loch, and which rise from thirty to forty feet above the water. As we approached the spot, I recognized it as one which, on my ride to Stewart's Inn, had struck me as dangerous, from the road being cut close to the brink of the precipice, and the traveller being unprotected by any fence. I had looked at it with some interest; but little thought how soon my attention would be again drawn to it, and how fatal it was likely to prove to the humble friend who then cautioned me not to trust my horse so near its edge. If we had had no other means of recognizing it, the moans of poor Dugald would have been sufficient. He lay half in the water which washed the base of the rock, and was evidently so

much hurt as to be incapable of moving. His groans were heart-rending, and were mingled with the expressions, “ och!—my dear master!” long before the warm-hearted creature was sensible that we were so near him. It was with some difficulty that we descended to the spot where he lay. On first seeing us, a gleam of joy spread over his countenance; and he stretched out the only hand which he could move towards me.

“ My dear master!” exclaimed the kind-hearted creature, “ she is now contented.”

“ Tell me, Dugald!” said I, “ where you are chiefly hurt? where is your pain? I know all that has occurred:—it is for your safety, only, that I am now interested.”

“ Weel, weel,” replied he, suppressing with much effort the expression of his agony, “ that is eneugh: it will soon be o’er; but she is now happy.”

“ But say, Dugald!” I again urged, “ where are *you* hurt?”

“ Troth, every where: there’s no a bane o’ my body that does nae aik; but ye need nae fret about it; she is an auld, feckless man; she has naeboddy, except ye’re honour, wha cares a strae for her: she has gat what she wished

for, to die afore ye're honour ; and hae her e'en closed by ye're hand. Och—on!" and he groaned deeply—" but she is now happy."

It was necessary that he should instantly be moved, as the powers of life were apparently sinking : still I had hopes that the natural vigour of his constitution would sustain him, severe as were the contusions which he had suffered. With much difficulty, we carried him along the side of the lake for a short distance, and placed him on the plat of gravel where Miss Ashton had landed. For a moment, he breathed with greater ease ; then looking wistfully in my face, and pressing my hand with a kind of convulsive grasp with one hand, whilst he pulled me forcibly by the coat with the other, he fetched a deep sigh, and again looked as if he wished to detail what had happened ; the words hung upon his lips, which moved, but he spoke not ; he fell back in my arms—gave two or three convulsive sobs—followed by a lengthened audible expiration—and all was still. I thought he had fainted, and hastily requested the Cantab to bring some water to sprinkle over his face. It was useless : the tide of life had ebbed, never to flow again : not a pulse was felt at the wrist, nor a flutter at the heart :—one convulsive sob alone was again audible—

—and all connection of the noble spirit of my humble, but affectionate friend, with this living world, ceased for ever. It is unnecessary—it is impossible—to describe what I felt on this occasion.

The remains of Dugald rest in the south-west corner of the church-yard at Callander: the Veteran, Mr. Sketchly, and the Cantab, accompanied me to the funeral: there were no prayers read—it is not the fashion of the country; but, when the last piece of turf was placed over the mould, when the finishing blow of the spade was given to it, and, as is usual in the north, the hats of the mourners were lifted in silence, I could command myself no longer: the body which we had just committed to the ground was to me as that of a brother: all that poor Dugald had done for me—his self-denial—his kindness—his unceasing, affectionate attention—all rushed upon my memory: I burst into tears and sobbed like a boy. I am not ashamed to pen the sentence. I loved Dugald as a brother; and if there is, as I firmly believe, “a certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life,” such disinterested goodness, struggling without a murmur with the inflictions of poverty and the pangs of bodily suffering, must rise to receive that re-

ward which we are told has been prepared for the blessed from the beginning of the world.

I was kindly led from the grave by the Veteran, who, whilst he knew too well the human heart to meddle with my grief, or to utter a word of consolation, brushed a tear from his cheek, and conducted me to my apartment in the inn.

He had no sooner left the room, than I threw myself upon my bed and gave a free vent to my sorrow ; but sleep, the sweetest balm to the wretched (I had not closed my eyes since the death of Dugald), soon overcame me ; and I remained unconscious, until roused by the hand of the Veteran kindly pressed upon mine. I almost involuntarily rose, and allowed myself to be led by him to the dinner table, where his excellent wife and daughter, with Mr. Sketchly, and the Cantab, were already seated

Before leaving Callander, I fulfilled my intention, and saw an eglantine planted on the grave of Dugald. I had now performed the last services of affection to the best of men, the most disinterested of friends ; and may that emblem of his virtues never be dismembered by the destructive hands of idleness, nor

rooted up by the command of cold-hearted utilitarianism !

On the following morning, the whole party left Callander. The Veteran had received a letter from Mr. Mordaunt, announcing the arrival of himself and his companion in the Scottish metropolis ; but lamenting the fruitless issue of their enquiries respecting the fugitives, whom they had been able to trace only as far as Stirling. It further mentioned, that, judging from his knowledge of the present state of feeling of all the party that a quiet residence would be preferred to an hotel, he had secured apartments for the family and myself in Sutherland's lodging, where he and Mr. Mordaunt would be waiting to receive us on our arrival. Having nothing to detain us in Callander, we set off on the morning of the day after that of the funeral of poor Dugald, with the intention of reaching Edinburgh that evening.

Neither the Scottish horses nor the Scotch postillions are accustomed to consider time of importance to travellers ; so that the twilight was far advanced before we reached the " guid town." We were, indeed, not sensible that we were entering it until we found ourselves passing under the shadow of the Castle. In gazing,

as we drove along Princes Street, upon the dark mass of that stupendous bulwark, and the dusky buildings ranging along the brow of the declivity which descends from it to the eastward, with a light here and there twinkling in some high window, as if to mark more forcibly the dread elevation of the houses, I could scarcely believe that I had so lately left the city, or that the singular adventure, which had so hastened my return, was other than a dream.

Miss Standard, who travelled in the same carriage with the Veteran, Mrs. Standard, and myself, had avoided, during the journey, making the most distant allusion to her cousin ; and had anxiously endeavoured to divert the mind of her mother from dwelling upon the afflicting circumstance which hurried us onward. The strong impression, however, which the half-obscured ruin of the Castle and the Old Town, now made upon her mind, completely threw her off her guard.

“ How different,” said she, “ is the present aspect of this singular scene from that which it wore the last evening that we walked in Princes Street ! It was a fine summer evening : the street was a gay and animated promenade, and poor Caroline in the highest spirits. Do you not recollect, Papa, that a gentleman turned

round and gazed after her for some minutes ? and, so extraordinary, Doctor !” said she, “ are coincidences, that that very individual afterwards accidentally met and joined our party in the Highlands, in the person of Mr. Mordaunt.”

Mrs. Standard smiled upon her daughter ; but sighed deeply ; and I could plainly perceive that the Veteran was desirous the subject should be dropped. I made no reply ; and the carriage, in a few minutes afterwards, stopped in Herriot Row. Mr. Sketchly and the Cantab had arrived before us, and had dropped Miss Bridget at Sutherland’s ; and she now beckoned to us from the window ; where she was with the Advocate and Mr. Mordaunt, who, in a moment, were at the door of the carriage. The greeting was that of real, if not old, friends : the Advocate looked cheerful and happy ; but traces of the deepest anxiety were imprinted on the countenance of Mr. Mordaunt ; and it was equally apparent that his health was suffering under it. The details of their journey were soon told. They had traced the fugitives as far as Stirling, where, however, instead of changing horses, they stopped only for a few minutes : no person left the carriage, the windows of which were kept up, and nothing was mentioned by the postillions. From

this time every trace of them was lost ; but, from the information which the Advocate had given to the police, and the well-known activity of its officers, there was every reason for hoping that some satisfactory intelligence might soon be obtained.

“ I have been informed,” said the Advocate, “ that Mackenzie, the lawyer, who I thought, from his voice, was one of the party in the boat on Loch Cateran, has been for some months on the continent ; but this I suspect to be a falsehood. Nothing is more evident than that the whole transaction has been well planned, and every precaution adopted, both to secure the secrecy of the inferior conspirators, and the flight of those who are the chief perpetrators of the crime.”

This intelligence, and this opinion of the Advocate, was any thing but a source of comfort to the party. The Advocate, however, expressed his determination to leave no means untried to gain that information which could alone lead to the restoration of Miss Ashton ; and Mr. Mordaunt felt some consolation, in having not only the advice of his friend, but the aid of his personal efforts, for that purpose.

“ Were I not,” said the Advocate, “ in momentary expectation of that intelligence which

must direct our pursuit, I should insist on the whole party dining with me to-morrow, at a small house which I have, about five miles from town, a kind of *rendezvous de chasse*, to use the mongrel language of fashionable life, among the hills."

Both the Veteran and Mrs. Standard expressed their thanks for the politeness of the kind-hearted lawyer; but they assured him that, if even time permitted them to accept his hospitable offer, their minds were too much engrossed with the fate of their niece to admit of any enjoyment. He acknowledged the propriety of these sentiments; and, with a proper consideration for the fatigue of the travellers, he and Mr. Mordaunt left the house.

After the Colonel and the ladies retired, I also took up my candle and sought my solitary apartment. I employ that epithet although, in fact, my room was not more solitary than it had always been; but it certainly felt more so than usual on this occasion. I felt the absence of poor Dugald there, busying himself with a variety of things, which he conceived to be necessary to my comfort.—I missed the good fire blazing, instead of the choked-up spark, in the grate, the sight of which, on my entrance, now made me shiver—

and I also missed my candles, ready-lighted—and my diary opened upon my table. I had, in the attention which these comforts required, a demonstration that some one cared for me; and this of itself warded off any feeling of desolation which might have intruded: so true is it that we never know the real value of what we possess, nor sufficiently prize the services of a friend, however humble, until we lose him.

Having put the poker into the expiring embers, and sat down to watch the effect, my mind naturally rested upon the striking confirmation of the adage which my own case presented. I saw, as Hamlet would have said, “in my mind’s eye,” the kind-hearted Celt pacing my room with as much softness of step as the halt of his lame knee permitted; then kneeling down beside me, and gently raising my foot upon his lap to undo the straps of my trowsers, and take off my shoe to replace it with a comfortably toasted slipper: I saw him airing my dressing gown, and patiently waiting, until I took off my coat, and silently slipped my arms into its sleeves; and, ere he uttered his “*gud nicht*,” I fancied that I beheld him casting his eyes around to be certain that every thing was in order; then snuffing my candles:

and, touching his forehead with the back of his hand, gliding out of the room.

How often are the senses deluded by the phantasms of the imagination ! How fondly do we yield to the deception, and almost regret to be undeceived ! My mind was in this condition, strongly impressed with the irreparable loss of my lamented servant, when I heard the room door gently opened ; and, on turning round, I literally beheld Dugald standing with it ajar in his hand. He gazed steadfastly upon me : I essayed to speak, but my tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my mouth, and utterance was refused ; still I struggled for speech :—it was in vain :—and, in my efforts to obtain it, having coughed violently, on afterwards raising my eye to the door, to my astonishment and disappointment, it was shut, and no person was in the room. So convinced, however, was I of the reality of what I had seen, that I called “ come in,” and waited for a few seconds, almost expecting to see Dugald enter ; but, at length, memory resumed her influence, and I became conscious that the whole was a mere delusion of an over-excited brain.

What an opportunity would this incident offer to the superstitious to propagate error ; to

the sceptic to illustrate his favourite maxim of the illusory nature of all things, or to the philosopher to cogitate upon the influence of mental as well as physical agency upon the nerves! thought I, as I rubbed my eyes to be convinced that I was awake. I was setting myself to work out the explanation, when the room door was again opened; but, instead of poor Dugald, Mr. Mordaunt entered. For a few moments, I gazed at the Clergyman, as if uncertain whether his appearance was real, or whether it was not another illusion of the fancy; but, on his addressing me, the matter was instantly settled.

“I rejoice, Doctor!” said he, “that you are not yet in bed, for I wish you to accompany me to the house of Mr. Oatlands, who has sent to inform me that he has discovered the haunt of Donald the boatman, who is in Edinburgh; and he is desirous that you and I should accompany him and two police officers to the place where the miscreant is lodged.”

“I will do so most willingly,” replied I: and, having drawn on the boots from which I had, only five minutes before, uncased my limbs, I accompanied the Clergyman to Saint Andrew’s Square, where we found the Advocate and Mr. Sketchly waiting for us. I was

soon satisfied of the accuracy of the information which had been obtained respecting the retreat of Donald. The police officers informed us that the Highlander was amply supplied with money, which he was lavishly spending in treating several of his countrymen, and others, who were settled as porters in the city ; and, through the perfidy of one of these friends, the discovery was made upon which we were now about to act. It still, however, remained doubtful whether Donald, who was so subordinate an agent in the plot, knew where the principal actors had fled, or how to direct our pursuit. It was, nevertheless, the only probable channel open to us : it was, therefore, necessary to investigate it ; and, with that intention, we followed the officers who were to guide us to the house.

CHAPTER V.

Charles—Did you see them ?

Officer— ————— As clear as I see you :

Three blacker-hearted knaves, in evil hour,
Did never danger league for desperate deeds.

MSS. DRAMA.

“STAY,” said the Advocate, as we were about to enter a dark, narrow passage, in the turn of the west Bow ; “ do look at that house, over which the moon is just rising, and throwing the whole into a deep shadow ; that was the dwelling of the celebrated wizard Major Weir. I recollect the time when I dared not approach it at this hour.”

“ It is almost a ruin,” said I ; “ and the other houses are little better.”

“ Yes,” replied the Advocate ; “ and they will soon be levelled, to make room for some contemplated improvement. I cannot help lamenting it: there is something in early associations which makes me even opposed to useful changes : in my time, he was a bold and

intrepid urchin who could climb ten steps of that scale stair*.”

I was preparing a remark on the antiquity of the houses, when I perceived the impatience of Mr. Mordaunt strongly marked upon his countenance, as he turned round to me, and the light of a lamp on the opposite side of the narrow street gleamed full upon his anxious face.

“ Let us enter, therefore,” said I : and the whole party followed the police-men into the narrow passage.

We were guided along it solely by the sides of the passage, which was pitch dark ; but, after two turnings, we suddenly emerged into the moonlight, and found ourselves at the summit of several flights of steps which led down, in the open air, to the Cowgate, the backs of the houses on the north side of which were now before us. It was a singular scene of half-ruined masses of ancient tenements, which, at one time, had been the habitations of the aristocracy of the Scottish capital, but were now let out, chiefly in single apartments, to the lowest class of the community. We paused for a few minutes on the platform, at the top

* Spiral staircase.

of these stairs, to contemplate the scene, and to concert further measures of precaution for preventing surprise, and the flight of those we were in search of, as the police-men assured us that there were numerous avenues of escape if the slightest intimation of our approach was given. It was agreed that one of our legal guides should remain upon the platform, to be prepared to give his assistance if necessary, and that the other should conduct us to Donald's apartment. We now ascended twenty or thirty broken steps of a winding staircase, and then proceeded along a kind of gallery, into which the moon shone through open arches, and enabled us to guard against stumbling in the holes which time had worn in the floor. Occupied as my mind was with the object which had led us in this singular place, I could not avoid gazing at the old sculptured, Saxon pillars which supported these arches, and which clearly demonstrated not only the antiquity of the tenement, but the aristocracy of its character in former days. We again ascended ten or twelve steps, and entered another dark passage. At the farther end of which was a door, and through some crevices in it the light of a candle streamed ; whilst it was evident, that the persons in the room to which it led were carousing. We stopped to

listen. The language of the carousers, the loudness of their voices, and the symptoms of discord that reigned, left no hesitation in our minds that, although Donald might be one of the party, yet, that none of the chief actors in the late conspiracy were present. Indeed, in a few minutes, we recognized the voice of the boatman in the following dialogue :

“ Tak your glass, my frien, and dinna fash your thumb about any risk to hersel ; Donald Cameron kens weel what she is about. Tak your glass, ye ken weel there’s nae lawing : that’s better than tabling down the pence ; is no that your opinion ?

“ An is it that you are after thinking of ?” retorted the person addressed, in a strong Irish accent ; “ maybe you wad wish to be tould that Patrick O’Reilly values your tret as little as a whiff of our grandmother’s pipe ! Ye know, Donald Cameron, that I could clep you up in the Heart of Mid Lothian, or even hang you, were I nat a man of a tinder conscience !”

“ Speak nae o’ conscience in my presence, Patrick ! ’tis a burning shame to lear sic a word blasphemed in your mouth !” exclaimed a third speaker, whose drawling voice indicated him to be a west-countryman.

“ My faith ! that comes ill frae you, Peter ;

I opine there's little conscience among the hale o' us! or we wad nae be now carousing with the unhaly gains of Donald: but let sic nonsense alane, and I'll gie ye a sang."

This was spoken evidently by a female, who followed up her remark with the following verse of one of Burns' songs, sung with a degree of taste that astonished our party:

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
An fill it in a silver tassie,
That I may drink, before I go,
A service to my bonnie lassie.

"What did Mackenzie gie you, Donald, for this last turn?" said the third speaker, interrupting the song. "By my faith! he is as thorough a pad scoundrel as ere kept his neck out o' a tether, yet he wad think naething o' clapping an honest man into the Tolbooth on bare suspicion."

"Never was a juster sentence passed!" whispered the Advocate; "yet the scoundrel who has uttered it is the informer in the present instance,—as sanctified a looking knave as ever pestered society. We shall now, I hope, have a confession."

"What's that to you?" was the reply of

the cautious Donald. "She gat what she asked, and that's eneugh."

"We'll see ye swing for it yet, frae the west end," uttered the female again; "ye're a dour brute, that could look in sic a face as that leddy's, and hurt a hair o' her head, for a' the writers and colonels in the warld."

"Ye're a bonnie lass yoursel, May Macmurdo!" rejoined the third speaker.

"Hands off, Jock Douglas!" exclaimed the female. "I say he is a heartless brute! If I kenn'd where the leddy's friends are, I wad get him laid up by the heels."

Mr. Mordaunt pushed forward towards the door, as if eager to proclaim himself, and those with him ready to receive the information thus proffered; but the Advocate restrained him.

"Be patient, my excellent friend!" whispered he; "your impetuosity will spoil every thing."

The voice of Donald was again heard in reply.

"Wad ye like cauld iron in ye're guts, May? Maybe ye're tired o' life? do ye want me to draw this gulley across ye're craig? She's no soon provoked; but, when her birse is ance up, she's the very deevil in h—ll."

“ Its aw a piece of stuff,” said the sanctified speaker again ; “ she wad only do so for the love o’ lucre ; and there’s nane here to pay her.”

The Advocate grasped more firmly the arm of Mr. Mordaunt, as he stood beside him ; for he felt that he was again ready to spring forwards, and he even heard his heart beating audibly.

“ Jock Douglas,” rejoined the female, “ ye judge eithers by y’ersel : I dinna cant and screw my mouth, and turn up the white o’ my e’e, at kirk, like a seceder, as ye do ; and then peach an hang ye’re friens, like anither Iscariot, —ye base, hypocritical loon !”

“ Keep a better tongue in ye’re head, May, my jewel !” said O’Reilly : “ I’m after thinking that ye’re little better here than a laverock in the hawk’s e’e.”

“ I have nae fear o’ either Jock or Donald,” replied the dauntless female ; “ there’s ane that I ken wad soon spit them baith, war they to touch me. I hate hypocrites !—an the blackguard wha, for twa or three guineas, could pit into the hands o’ that ruffian Mac-kensie and that Colonel — what’s his name ?—sae beautifu’ an innocent a creature as I saw step into the chaise at the Black Bull, will ne’er

cheat the gallows:—I could tuck up the beast myself."

"'Tak' ye that, ye d—d she deevil!" was uttered by Donald; and a blow was evidently given; for the words were almost instantly followed by a piercing shriek, and the noise of the overturning of chairs and tables, the breaking of glasses, and the rush of feet.

'This was the moment for our entrance: the police-man therefore burst open the door, and exposed the boatman, collared by his two companions, and the female, prostrate on the floor, bleeding profusely. 'The struggling of the Highlander, whose face was purple with rage, and the efforts of the other miscreants to prevent him from again attacking the wounded woman with a knife, which he grasped in his hand, so engrossed for a moment their entire attention, that our entrance was not perceived.

With the aid of Mr. Mordaunt, I raised the woman, who had been rather stunned by the blow than seriously hurt; for the knife had only divided a few small vessels on the temple, the head having been protected by the thick black hair, which her fall had loosened from the comb that held it up, and which now veiled her face. On placing her in a chair, and

sprinkling some water over her, she opened her eyes—looked round wildly—and, uttering another piercing shriek, went into a violent hysteric. In the mean time, with the aid of the other police-man, who had found his way into the room on hearing the noise, the boatman and his companions were separated, and, after the most desperate resistance, all three were secured and handcuffed.

The sanctified miscreant, who had been the means of leading to their apprehension, pleaded his services with the Advocate as a cause for setting him at liberty; but Mr. Oatlands informed him that his testimony would be necessary in the Police Court, where he would now have the pleasure of escorting him; after which, if the magistrate thought proper, he should be set at liberty. The appearance of Donald, on finding himself thus in the power of the friends of Miss Ashton, may be more readily conceived than described. O'Reilly declared that he knew nothing of the abduction; that he had met May Macmurdo, who asked him to accompany her to the lodging of a friend of her father from the north, “who had got some of the blunt left him by a dere relation, and was going to give a ploy.” He protested that he was “as

innocent of the knowledge of Donald's guilt as the unborn babe."

"Upon what plea, then, Mr. O'Reilly," said the Advocate, "could you have imprisoned, or even hanged, your worthy companion?"

"Faith, Mr. Oatlands,"—for the ruffian had been a client of the Advocate, and recognized him,—“ye even now, truly, press me too hard: but ye're honour knows that a man is moulded by his comrades; and it needs no great clerkship to guess that a chum of sanctified Peter—honest man!—must be in fair training for the gallows. Ye're honour—may Heaven bless you!—got me out of one scrape, and I expect ye will now let me go home to my childer."

"Your hopes, Mr. O'Reilly!" replied the Advocate, "will not be fulfilled in the present instance: you know more of Donald than you admit, and we cannot spare so valuable a witness."

Donald now began to perceive that all chance of escape was at an end; especially as the Advocate, on examining the female, who had recovered, had procured from her the fact, that a lady, answering the description of Miss Ashton, had departed from the Black Bull Inn,

in company with a gentleman and a female servant, two days before; and that the boatman had informed her that the young lady was the person he had assisted in carrying off from Stewart's Inn.

"May be, Sir," said the cunning miscreant, throwing off the sullen, dark look which he had worn since his capture, and addressing Mr. Mordaunt, "ye wad nae be agen hearing something o' the young leddy here, rather than in the police-office? Do ye nae think that we cou'd speak mair freely here than in the court? is that no ye're opinion?"

Mr. Mordaunt looked at the Advocate, as if to illicit his sentiments on this proposition."

"Yes," replied the lawyer; "if we can trust the ruffian. On every account it would be better, as we might be detained by the forms of the court; and, if the information be such as we can depend upon, we should not lose a moment in the pursuit."

"Ye say richt," rejoined Donald, with consummate impudence; "they're far eneuch awa wham ye seek; and I opine ye've no time to lose: do ye nae think it better to tak her deposition anent them matters without delay? Is that no ye're opinion, Sir?"

The insolence, and the cool impudence of

the scoundrel, made us hesitate as to the propriety of liberating him on his confession ; but the urgency of time left us no choice. The Advocate, therefore, informed him that every thing depended on the truth of his information ; and that, although he should be now liberated, yet, that the police would not lose sight of him, and punishment should certainly overtake him, if we discovered that he had deceived us.

“ Nae doubt, Sir, nae doubt ; naething can be mair just. She has, howsomever, repented, and wad be glad to mak a clear conscience ; it’s a sair thing to be fashed wi’ a load o’ sin : do ye nae think sae, Sir ? ”

“ Now is the moment to throw it off, Donald,” said the Advocate ; “ and, therefore, tell us all you know about this iniquitous transaction.”

“ A weel, Sir, she’ll be upon honour ; but ye dinna think she can speak wi’ thae manicles on ? Wad it nae be out o’ nature to expect the tongue to be unshackled when the rest o’ the members are in bondage ? Ye need nae fear, when thae twa harpies o’ the police are in the room, either for ye’re sels or for May, though she awes her a grudge.”

“ Any thing to secure the information we so eagerly desire,” said Mr. Mordaunt.

'The Advocate, therefore, ordered Donald to be unfettered, and to proceed with his narrative.

It was a scene for the pencil of Wilkie. 'The apartment was large, and displayed, in the wretchedness of its present condition, the remains of its original grandeur ; the black oak panelling which covered the walls, broken and falling to pieces, exhibited, in various places, the remnants of masterly carving, which was more than equalled by the flowered ornaments on the roof, even now nearly entire, although obscured by smoke and dust. 'The ample chimney still boasted its marble moulded jambs, its Dutch tiles, and its elevated, grotesquely figured, mantle-shelf, which ill accorded with the wretchedness of the furniture : namely, four crippled chairs, and the table that had been overturned in the scuffle, with a trundle bed in the corner. On the panelling between the windows, which were four with thirty panes in each, hung a miserably coloured engraving of the Pretender, and another of John, Duke of Argyle ; and over the mantle-shelf, was a broken looking-glass behind the candle, which threw its light upon the party below. 'The group consisted of the miscreants, O'Reilly and sanctified Peter, with a police-man close to each, and Donald in his

Highland garb, a little in advance of them, confronted by the Advocate, who stood with his hand upon the back of a chair, with all the dignity which his miniature person could assume, rendered still more diminutive when compared with the athletic boatman, whose categories he was receiving. Near him, on the floor, sat the female, May Macmurdo, her forehead resting on her right hand, veiled by her long, black, dishevelled hair; and supported by Mr. Sketchly, whose kind heart never failed to impel him to offer his assistance to any woman in distress, whatever might be her failings or unworthiness. I was seated on a chair near him, deeply interested with the appearance of Mr. Mordaunt, who stood, leaning with one arm upon the mantle-shelf, seeming as if he could look into the very heart of Donald, and eager to seize every sentence he uttered, whilst the varying expression of his countenance betrayed each feeling that was passing through his anxious mind. The two pyramidal groups, which had been thus unconsciously formed, were rendered more picturesque by the light being thrown from above, and the soft, deep shadows which mingled with the general obscurity of the apartment.

“Weel,” said Donald, “it wad aiblains be

best to begin frae the beginning : is that nae ye're idea o' the thing, Sir ?”

“ No more of your interrogatories, Donald !” said the Advocate ; “ but inform us simply what you know of the plot to carry off Miss Ashton, and what part you played in it, however diabolical : you know the terms on which you are to speak the truth.”

“ Perfectly, Sir, perfectly,” replied Donald : “ but, as for ony thing diabolical, there is little doubt that the ledly is now muckle obliged to me, for she was hinging on the Colonel's arm, without a tear in her ee, and stapped into the carriage, wi' her servant lass and the Colonel, at the Black Bull, as if naething had happened.”

Mr. Mordaunt's countenance fell, and he advanced a step towards Donald and uttered the monosyllable “ how ?”—but immediately checked himself, and resumed his former position.

“ She is sure,” continued Donald, “ the Colonel is a kind man ; and hersel has cause to say, a free-handed man, for he gave her a guinea o'er an aboon what he had bargained for : was nae that enuch to mak her speak weel o' him ?”

“ Who do you speak of ?” said the Advocate.

“ Wha does she speak o’ ?” repeated Donald, looking up with affected surprise, “ wha should it be, but Colonel Manvers.”

“ Manvers ?” said I, believing that I had heard wrong.

“ Manvers ?” exclaimed Mr. Mordaunt, knitting his brows, and gazing inquisitively at the boatman.

“ Manvers ! did you say ?” enquired Mr. Oatlands.

“ Just so,” replied Donald ; “ an a bra looking man is she, though a wee bit o’er auld for so young a leddy. Do ye nae think there is a propriety in a parity o’ years, as the minister says ? but ye ken weel, Mr. Mordaunt,” turning his eye upon the Clergyman, “ that matches are made in heaven.”

Mr. Mordaunt looked thoughtful ; and the Advocate reminded Donald to forbear his comments, and proceed with his narrative.

“ Weel,” continued the boatman, “ ye see, she met the Colonel, and anither gentleman, and that foul-mouthed writer, Mackenzie, wha every body kens : nae doubt ye ken him weel, Mr. Oatlands, though he is no o’ your set ? Weel, as she was saying, she met them in the glen about three days afore the leddy gaed awa.

“ ‘ Boatman !’ said Mackenzie, ‘ its a

cheerfu' and a profitable life yours in the summer, but little to brag o' in the winter: wad ye nae like to better yoursel ?'

" ' Nae doubt,' said she ; ' we a' like to rise i' the world.'

" ' Weel,' said Mackenzie, ' we may help ye on. Ken ye ought about the auld Colonel and his family up at Stewart's ?'

" ' That she does,' said she ; ' he's a decent man, and has twa nice lasses, a dochter and a niece ; as for his wife, I've ne'er cast een upon *her*.'

" ' Do they aften come down to the loch ?' said Mackenzie.

" ' Now and then,' said she, ' wi' some younkers wha are travelling wi' them.' "

" Be more brief, Donald !" said the Advocate ; " we do not desire all these details."

" Weel, weel, Sir ! her tale is soon tald. Ye see, after twa or three meetings, he let me into the secret o' the plot to carry off Miss Ashton, and engaged me to wheedle her some morning into my boat on Loch Achray. She need nae say mair on that head : ye ken what happened. Colonel Manvers" (at this name Mr. Mordaunt again advanced towards Donald, and stood gazing earnestly at him, with his arms folded upon his breast) " aye—in troth—he promised her ten guineas for the job, and she

has got it, and a guinea mair since she cam to Edinburgh. I opine, Sir, ye're now satisfied : is that no true ?”

“ Not at all, Donald,” said the Advocate ; “ you must inform us what you know of this Colonel Manvers ? what he did after his arrival in town ? and where he is gone to ?”

“ Stap, stap, Sir !” replied the insolent ruffian ; ye're no i' the court o' session wi' your gown on, an your twa-tailed wig. Ye canna say that she bargained to stand a cross-examination.”

“ Donald ! you are an incorrigible rascal,” said the Advocate, coolly ; “ but recollect that we have a pair of mufflers here ; and you know the consequence of contumacy.”

“ Just gie her breath, Sir ; ye ask'd if she kens ony thing o' Colonel Manvers : how should she ? But, gif ye weel take hearsay evidence, she heard that he cam frae England, somewhere about a place they ca' Rochdale.”

Mr. Mordaunt breathed short, and turned pale ; but, instantly recovering himself, he desired Donald to mention again the name of the place whence Colonel Manvers came ; which was instantly done.

“ It is enough,” he said ; and, sitting down upon a chair, he threw his arm over the back of it, and rested his forehead upon his hand.

The Advocate looked for an instant at his friend ; and, observing that something had affected him, he hurried the examination of Donald, and endeavoured to bring him at once to the point ; namely, where Colonel Manvers had gone to. It was evident, from Donald's replies, that the fugitives had set off for London two days ago ; and that, whatever might be the cause of so extraordinary a circumstance, there did not appear to have existed any opposition on the part of Miss Ashton. This information, with the additional fact that she had a maid with her, involved the whole affair in deeper mystery than ever. We looked at one another ; and it was apparent, from the surprise displayed in the countenance of each, that we were all anxious to communicate our ideas ; but this was not the place to do so : it was, therefore, proposed by the Advocate to leave the prisoners in the custody of the police-officers until the morning, when they should be set at liberty.

“ You may thank your stars, Donald,” continued the Advocate, “ that you have escaped the punishment which you richly deserve. Return to Loch Cateran, and ply your boat in an honest way.”

“ Hout ! hout ! ” exclaimed Donald ; “ giv it be a' the same to ye, Sir ? she wad rather

be hangit than gane back to the loch. Na! na! she means to set up a chair, in the guid town, if she can get an odd man to tak a lift wi' her."

"As for you, O'Reilly!" continued the Advocate, "your former good deeds are not forgotten by me: take care of your conduct; a man may escape once; but—"

"An, by my soul! I know what you are after saying, so you need not speke it; ye're not the only Advocate who has bamboozled a jury and witnesses; but Patrick O'Reilly never was accused of ingratitude: as to being here, was it not that jewel of a cretur, May Macmurdo, that enticed me?"

"Marry her, O'Reilly, and let both of you reform," replied the Advocate.

"I wad walk a mile over hot ploughshares any day to oblige ye're honour," said O'Reilly; "but I can't favour your present recommendation, were ye're honour a prest insted of a lawyer. Look ye—I have all my life had some fond cretur forcing me to follow her steps insted of my own: devil a soul of my own, or a heart either, have I been able to keep among the dear jewels—good luck to them! but, sweet creturs as they are, Patrick O'Reilly has always been his own maister. May, my darling! ye're

a jewel of a cretur ; but I have nae desire to be maistered by any woman ; nor scoulded here—and scoulded there—and have the house in a blaze—the moment I endulge in a bit of a spree.”

We were leaving the room, and the hopeful party to the care of the officers, when sanctified Peter stopped the Advocate, and put the following questions to him.

“ May I speer, Mr. Oatlands, if there be any law again intercommunication ? I opine there is a wee whaup o’ the rape here ; an that it might stan an action for false imprisonment.”

The Advocate did not reply ; and we left the question to be settled between the officers and the sanctified knave who put it. Mr. Mor-daunt seemed to linger as if he wished to question Donald farther ; but the Advocate put his arm in his, and piloted us safely into the open air, where we all again felt that we could breathe easily, and were glad to be freed from any farther trouble with such miscreants. As we walked down the High Street, the clock of St. Giles’ chimed three ; but it was a heavenly night, and the effect of moonlight, on the high, antiquated buildings of this part of the town, would, on any other occasion, have forcibly arrested our attention. Little was said by any of

us, except a passing remark on the extraordinary lives of the class of the community of which the specimen we had just parted from was so striking an example.

When we arrived at Princes Street—
 “Oatlands !” said Mr. Mordaunt — “the whole of the information you have elicited from Donald, you may readily imagine, has not tended to set my mind at ease. In the first place, the willingness of Miss Ashton to proceed, confirmed by the circumstance of her having a maid with her, is most inexplicable ; and still more so is the fact that Colonel Manvers is the person who has carried her off. I am truly wretched ; and must continue so until my mind is satisfied that either both pieces of information are false, or that I have been deceived in my opinion of Miss Ashton ; the bare idea of which is misery.”

“Be patient, my dear friend,” replied the Advocate ; “harbour no suspicions in your mind derogatory to Miss Ashton, who, notwithstanding the shortness of my acquaintance with her, is, I will pledge my existence, incapable of any thing sinister. With respect to Colonel Manvers, I can say nothing.”

“I never saw him,” said Mr. Mordaunt, “though his brother is my warmest friend. I

have heard that his libertine habits had given great uneasiness, both to the Earl his father, and to my friend ; but one thing induces me to think that there is some mistake, as his age does not accord with that of the individual we are in search of."

"The person," rejoined the Advocate, "which the Doctor and I saw, at the foot of the rock, was at least sixty."

"He could not be less, Mr. Mordaunt," said I ; "but conjectures, calculated merely to make you more miserable than you are, would be worse than useless. There is much villainy at all times afloat in the world : the name of Manvers may be assumed ; and, as to the disposition of Miss Ashton, we can place little reliance on the observations of such people as Donald. Cease then to perplex and entangle yourself in a maze of fruitless imaginings."

Mr. Mordaunt admitted that my arguments were correct ; nevertheless, feelings, such as he then experienced, were not easily kept down ; but he trusted in Providence that the issue would be more felicitous than the feeble foresight of any of us could at that moment anticipate.

As we were now at the door of Sutherland's, we parted with the determination of concerting in

the morning what measures were next to be pursued. Mr. Mordaunt went home with the kind-hearted Sketchly, and the Advocate departed to his own house in Saint Andrew's Square.

Although I retired to bed, yet it was vain to expect sleep. I felt keenly for Mr. Mordaunt ; probably, if the cause had been sifted, the more keenly, from some fancied similarity between his present condition and my own ; when one, on whose affection I had the deepest claims, had renounced my heart for that of a rival whose sole superiority was wealth and title. There is, in truth, a mixture of selfishness even in our sympathies ; and perhaps the opinion is not wholly untenable that we feel for others, only when we place ourselves, in thought, in the disastrous circumstances which raises our compassion for them. The object of all my solicitude, of all my miseries, had been long dead to me, as she was now to the world ; but, had she lived, no reproaches of mine would have ever discomposed her pillow : she had inflicted a wound on my heart which time could never heal ; but, if it was the will of Heaven to permit such an affliction, never should I have allowed selfish feelings to add one pang to the many which, I am certain, wrung the bosom of

the frail being who implanted the seeds of never-dying wretchedness in mine. The bitterness of the cup of which I had partaken had passed away ; but the memory of it still occasionally recurs ; and, in spite of all my philosophy, turns the stream of misery of the past into the channel of the present. I sympathize with Mordaunt from the inmost recesses of my heart, and I shall sacrifice time and fortune to discover and punish the author of his grief.

In the morning, the worthy Veteran and his family were informed of the occurrences of the night ; and it was agreed that Mr. Mordaunt, the Advocate, and I, should immediately proceed to London, and that the family should follow at a more easy rate of travelling. If the information which we expected to obtain in the metropolis should lead us to leave it before the arrival of the Veteran, it was also agreed that he should wait there for our dispatches, to direct his future progress. These preliminaries being settled, and having bade adieu to the family, and received an affectionate farewell from the kind-hearted Sketchly and the Cantab, we drove off from Sutherland's at four o'clock in the afternoon.

CHAPTER VI.

Lear. No ; I will be the pattern of all patience ;
I will say nothing.

WHEN the carriage, in which we left Edinburgh, had reached the heights above Arniston, the Advocate, who was an enthusiast in every thing connected with his romantic town, requested Mr. Mordaunt to look back upon the scene which we had passed, and say if he had ever seen any thing to surpass it. The Clergyman complied with his friend's request, but said nothing : his mind was evidently wholly absorbed by one object, and could admit no other, however pleasurable in itself, to displace it. The view of the Scotch Capital was at this time, indeed, one which, under other circumstances, would have powerfully arrested his attention. The intervening country, which is of the richest and most varied description, hill and dale, mountain and valley, was

softened down by the period of the day ; the town was seen rising, in the far distance, amidst an amphitheatre of hills, like a mass of dusky towers, faintly shrouded in the haze of advancing evening, and the Frith, stretching like a magnificent lake behind it, reflecting from its surface the sidelong rays of the declining sun. In the foreground, the woods which crowned the elevated spot, over which we were passing, were beginning to display the russet tints of autumn ; the fields every where were ready for the sickle ; in some, the reapers were busy ; in others, the shocks were even now standing ; and the whole landscape presented, in its richness, variety, and romantic features, a feast for the eye of taste of the most attractive character. Mr. Mordaunt looked at it and smiled ; but he was not in a humour for any enjoyment.

As he settled in the corner of the carriage, and the Advocate fell asleep, I employed myself in attempting to read what was passing in his mind, and to obtain another proof of the correctness of my theory of looks. I fancied that I could descry the evidence of a struggle in his mind between his wounded feelings, his affection, and his principles. He knew that, as it was his duty to teach resignation, it was equally his duty to practise it. I imagined

that it was not so much the abduction of Miss Ashton, and the danger to which it exposed her, which weighed down his spirits, as the ideas which the remarks of Donald had raised respecting the state of her feelings. His religious principles would have enabled him to triumph over the grief into which any account of her sufferings, or even of her death, would have plunged him ; but the most distant idea that she could have been a willing fugitive, that she felt happy in her present condition, or that any act approaching to deceit could taint a mind which he had regarded as only less than that of an angel's in its purity, brought with it a weight of suffering which he could not withstand.

It was impossible not to perceive, from the dejected look of the worthy Clergyman, his downcast eye, his almost suspended respiration, and the half-stifled sigh which every now and then escaped from his bosom, that his thoughts were wholly absorbed with the past ; and that he was reviewing every circumstance, however trivial, which had occurred since he had joined the party of the Veteran, which could cast the smallest gleam of light upon the sentiments of Miss Ashton. Affairs of no moment became important, and indicated feelings on the part of the young lady, which he was surprised had

made little or no impression at the time. Could his reflections have been displayed before me, I believe that the same conclusions would have followed the examination, which the countenance of my fellow traveller now led me to form. The fainting of Miss Ashton, when the mysterious person, whose presence at the lake had excited so much speculation, appeared suddenly amongst the trees, he now, at one moment, attributed to a consciousness that she knew who it was, and was aware of the object of his visit; whilst, at the next, he despised himself for believing that such a degree of duplicity could for an instant stain the purity of the object of his adoration. So singular are the vacillations of the feelings torn by doubt and conjecture—so closely allied is the heavenly sentiment of love to the fiend-like torment of jealousy in the breast of man! The natural cast of melancholy in the character of Mr. Mordaunt was, indeed, likely to foster such heart-sickenig, erring cogitations, which may truly be described as the offspring “of insatiate love.”

It was night when we entered the little town of Melrose; and, although the moon was rising majestically, and not a cloud perceptible in the heavens, yet much of the interest of

our drive along the banks of the Tweed had been lost by the lateness of the hour.

“What a glorious night!” said the Advocate, rousing himself and rubbing his eyes, “what an opportunity for a walk to the ruins of the Abbey at midnight! Come, Mordaunt! cheer up. I know that you have never seen Melrose at that witching hour, so gloriously described by Sir Walter. You shall enjoy a feast to-night.”

Mr. Mordaunt smiled; but, instead of replying, he asked if it were possible that we could proceed a couple of stages farther?

“Possible enough, my dear fellow! but for what purpose?” was the Advocate’s answer. “If Donald’s information that the fugitives left Edinburgh two days ago be correct, no night travelling will enable us to overtake them before they reach the metropolis; wherefore, then, fatigue ourselves to a degree which will cripple exertion when we arrive there?”

I agreed with the Advocate, partly because the chance of overtaking the fugitives was hopeless;—partly because I hoped that so striking an object as the ruins of Melrose Abbey would, for a short time at least, tend to lessen the weight of anxiety, which was so ob-

viously wearing down both the bodily and the mental powers of the worthy Clergyman.

After having taken tea and muffled ourselves in our cloaks, we proceeded to the ruins of the Abbey, as the clock struck eleven.

The Verger, at whose door we knocked to gain admission to the interior of the ruin, was also the Sexton. Conceiving, no doubt, that his occupation was one which required that the radical moisture, as well as the radical heat, should be duly maintained, he daily moistened his clay so assiduously, that he was never visible to strangers, at so late an hour as we demanded his services. His daughter, therefore, an active maiden of twenty-three or four, supplied his place on these occasions. She apologized for the old man, by saying that he was indisposed ; and, with a lamp in one hand and a large key in the other, she led the way into the Abbey.

“ It is a capital nicht, gentlemen, for seeing a’ the beauties of the ruin,” said she, as she turned the key in the door, and ushered us into that part of the building which is still employed as a parish church. We passed hastily through it ; and, entering the antient chancel, experienced that admiration which is felt by every one who has gazed upon its fallen grandeur.

The moon, which poured its soft light upon the broken arches, and threw the shadow of the magnificent window across the rooted-up pavement, now strewed with the fragments of the stone roof, brought into the most beautiful relief the rich tracery of the sculptured ornaments, contrasted with their shadows, producing the effect, to borrow a metaphor, of silver chasings upon a ground of ebony*.

“That is the tomb o’ Michael Scott, out o’ which the licht cam, that Sir Walter has described in his Lay o’ the Last Minstrel. That stane—ye see there—was lifted by William o’ Deloraine: ye’ll recollect that Sir Walter says :

‘The toil-drops fell from his brows like rain.

‘It was by dint of passing strength

‘That he moved the massive stone at length.’

It wad be lang ere ony man now living could move it. And that marble stane,” continued our communicative conductress,” is the tomb o’ the King; and that is the tomb o’ the first Abbot: and just stand here, sir,” said the damsel, addressing Mr. Mordaunt, “and look through thae arches, and ye’ll acknowledge ye have never seen any ruin like it. I wish the sweet,

* Scott.

young lady I showed through the Abbey, by day-light, twa days ago, were here now, to admire that sight. She had mair taste than anybody I ever shewed it to afore. Aye, and she was very pretty, and looked sae waefu; and, in truth, the tears started into her ee, as she sate on that very stane, and listened to a story I told her o' a young couple wha lately cam to see the ruin at nicht; an' the lady fell ill, and died at the inn."

Mr. Mordaunt gazed at the young woman as she spoke; then looked significantly at Mr. Oatlands, who enquired if any one accompanied the lady.

"Yes," replied she, "I'se warrant it was her father or her uncle,—a comely, gude-looking, tall man, like an officer, only he was not dressed like an army man."

"Have you any idea where they were going?" said the Advocate.

"Na, sir! I never speir where folks come frae, nor where they are going. Bless you, sir, there are often thirty or forty persons in a day visiting the ruin: there would be no end of it."

"Did you hear the name of the lady?"

"Her christian name?—I heard the auld gentleman call her—Caroline."

Mr. Mordaunt advanced a few steps towards the speaker ; then, as if recollecting himself, he sat down upon the stone, which is called the Abbot's tomb, and seemed to sink into a kind of reverie. Mr. Oatlands and myself followed our talkative Cicerone over the rest of the building, examined the cloisters, the remains of the refectory, the gallery which runs round the wall of the choir, and other details. On returning, we found our friend seated where we had left him. Our approaching steps roused him from the dreamy state in which he was absorbed ; and, starting up, a transient flush, as if ashamed of having displayed so openly his feelings, spread over his countenance ; and, addressing our conductress, he enquired so minutely into every circumstance connected with the appearance and the conduct of the old gentleman and his youthful companion, that the girl stared at him for a few seconds ; and then said—"May be, sir, ye're a brother o' that lady ? I canna aver that she looked either weel or happy ; but, oh ! she was sae pretty ! sic a delicate form ! sic rich, shining, auburn hair ! and een that, I'm sure, were never made for sorrow ; yet she did look the most melancholy young lady I've seen for mony a day !"

Mr. Mordaunt stood like a statue during

this recital, deeply absorbed in thought. It was evident that a variety of conjectures had been awakened in his mind, by the girl's description of the person in whose power the object of his solicitude still remained. It was natural that he should be perplexed in reconciling to himself by what fascinations a person who, from every account, was of an age more like that of a father than of a lover, could fetter the mind of a young, high-spirited female, so as to paralyze every effort which might be attempted to escape from the thralldom; for he could not admit the idea that her detention could be otherwise than coercive. The remarks of Mrs. Standard had induced him to cherish the idea that the attachment which he felt for Caroline Ashton was reciprocal; yet his mind vacillated between hope and doubt--between security and disappointment; and his anguish was in the proportion of the doubt which involved the event. Reflections which, in spite of himself, arose in his mind respecting the possibility of insincerity on the part of Miss Ashton, were not the least of the mental tortures which consumed him, and almost made him feel that it would be happiness to be relieved of life. Indeed, he sometimes experienced a fearful desire impres-

sing his mind, against which, the soundness of his principles alone, and the obligations which he owed to his Creator, protected him. The intense feelings, however, which were passing in the mind of our friend were, too evidently, displayed in his appearance to be mistaken either by Mr. Oatlands or myself. I was shocked as I gazed upon his pale, dejected countenance and his sunken eye; and was reflecting how soon the insignia of grief are depicted upon the physiognomy, and considering which of the bodily organs the sedative influence of the depressing passions most powerfully affected, when the Advocate proposed that he and Mr. Mordaunt should return to the inn, and leave me to enjoy that view of the ruins from the churchyard, "which," said he, "in such a night as this cannot be equalled."

"Come, Mordaunt!" continued Mr. Oatlands; "you can neither see nor relish the sublime beauties of the Abbey to-night: I must be your Cicerone on some other occasion: let us retrace our steps to the inn, and leave the Doctor to satisfy his curiosity with the view of the great window from without."

Our conductress opened a little wicket door, at one end of the transept, through which the party passed into the churchyard; and,

having waited until my friends were out of sight, and heard the key harshly turned in the gate of the Abbey, I slowly walked to the spot in front of the great window, which Mr. Oatlands had pointed out as the proper place to view the ruins most advantageously by moonlight.

For a few minutes my attention was so wholly absorbed by the magnificent aspect of the sacred edifice, its unequalled window, its broken buttresses, its shattered pinnacles, mellowed and softened in the broad stream of subdued light which fell from the full orb of the moon, that I was unconscious of the peculiarity of my position, until the hour of midnight sounded from the clock-tower awakened my attention to it. I was leaning, surrounded by graves, upon one of those tabular monuments which are seen in almost every country church-yard. It was also that solemn hour when the spirits of the dead were supposed, in the days of superstition, to visit the mouldering remains of their former mortal tenements. Whose remains swelled the little hillock on which I stood it was impossible to conjecture. The antient edifice which had beheld many a proud and lofty spirit laid low, in that narrow bed which levels all humanity, however luxuriantly they may have budded and flourished in their sea-

son, was silent. In truth, it was of little moment. The dust of the scornful abbot and the bashful peasant had, long since, mingled together: the aspiring ambition of the one, the grasp of his capacities, his genius, the power of his acquirements, his rank, honours, and authority,—the monotonous, servile life of the other, his contented ignorance, confiding credulity, and rude but unsophisticated affections—had been equally arrested by that awful mandate which dissolves in a moment the mysterious union between soul and body—the immortal spirit and its mortal tenement—in this scene of its sojournment. The deepest silence, unbroken save by the muffled muttering of the Tweed, chafing in the shallows of its pebbly channel, brooded over the scene. It was such a moment as a contemplative man would select, to yield up the reins to his imagination, and

‘ ————— uncontrolled, as in a dream,
 ‘ To muse upon the course of human things*.’

I gave full scope to my fancy, and allowed both the minutes and the river to glide on unheeded, although the incidents which crowded upon my mental eye were, many of them, gloomy enough:—affections unreturned, friend-

* Southey.

ships misplaced, hopes blasted, and the whole of life's path a dreary waste, the retrospect of which was misery and pain.

Memory, what art thou? By what spell dost thou summon the past into the present? by what power awakest thou those who have long slept in the dread silence of the tomb, remoulding them as they were and breathing into them life and animation? How inadequate are the attempts of philosophers to reduce thy wonderful power to the laws of association! How still more futile to regard it as depending on a property of the brain, which enables it to retain vestiges of former ideas, until, like a worn-out inscription on a tablet renewed by the chisel, they are again brightened up by the influence of volition! "There seems," says Mr. Locke, "a constant decay of all our ideas, even of those that are struck deepest. The pictures drawn in our mind are laid in fading colours. Whether the temper of the brain makes this difference, that in some it retains the characters drawn on it like marble, in others like free-stone, and in others little better than in sand, I shall not enquire." It would be useless, thought I, turning the question in my mind—it would be useless to enquire. It is enough for me that to memory I am indebted for

the few pleasures that have soothed the dreary moments of my erratic life—the happy, thoughtless days of childhood—the endearments of maternal care—home, that paradise to youth of ease and comfort—all were tasted by me only to rekindle the imagination when far, far distant from their source. But, if I owe some gratitude to Memory on that account, to it also are due the most poignant sensations which have assailed my bosom in my mortal pilgrimage. Such were my cogitations as the magician again tried her skill, and brought before me one upon whose faults—I can scarcely pen the phrase—the portals of death have long since closed. I stood again in the room to which I had been summoned to pronounce the word—forgive—to sooth the fast-fading moments of her whom I had loved from infancy, whose vows of fidelity were pledged to me when I left my paternal roof, to seek, by honourable exertions, that independence which was only desired to be shared with her; but who, forgetting all that she had felt and sworn, had opened her ear to flattery;—her eye to the splendour of rank and title, and gave her hand to one, who, not possessing her heart, by harshness and neglect after her marriage, brought her to an early grave. I stood by the sofa where she

lay; her blanched but yet beautiful face shaded by the dark, clustering ringlets which fell in profusion around it; a slight flush and a sweet, subdued smile overspread her countenance as she raised her eyes towards me, and, extending her hand to take mine, said—"Can you forgive me?" The reply—"I do, Amelia, from the bottom of my heart"—was again upon my lips, when the whole picture vanished in an instant. The ruined Abbey, the tabular monument on which I was leaning, the surrounding trees, the moon in the vault of the heavens shedding her placid light upon every object, were once more obvious to my eye, and, penetrating the silence, the muttering of the river again fell upon my ear. I was meditating on the causes which had recalled the scene which I have just described, when my attention was arrested by a quick, light step near me: and, turning round, I observed a female, wrapped in a mantle, rapidly tracing the gravel walk which leads from the parsonage-house, through the churchyard, to the street. The appearance of a lady (for her figure, gait, and dress evidently indicated her station), alone, at such an hour, even supposing that she had come from the Parsonage, astonished me. I almost involuntarily followed; but, ere I reached

the street, the figure had disappeared ; and as death-like a silence as I had left in the precincts of the Abbey reigned in the High Street of Melrose. I walked slowly down to the inn. The waiter, who had been watching my return, lighted me to my bed-room ; and, having placed a candle upon my table, he withdrew. I threw myself upon the bed, to reflect for a few minutes upon the incident which had hastened my return ; but, not being able to come to any satisfactory conclusion respecting it, I rose, and, as is my custom on such occasions, I opened the window and looked out upon the night.

The moon, which illuminated the side of the street on which the inn stood, threw a deep shadow over the opposite houses ; in one of which, however, a light appeared. There were neither curtains nor blinds to the window, to obstruct the view of the interior of the room, in which I observed a lady seated at a table, with a pair of candles, a small travelling desk, and some books, before her. She was supporting her forehead upon her hand, as if reflecting upon the contents of a book which she was evidently reading ; but, on raising her head, and shaking back the curls from her face, my astonishment was intense on perceiving that it was no other person than Caroline Ashton.

She began to read again, and continued to do so for a few minutes ; then closed the volume, and applied her handkerchief to her eyes. In the agitation of the moment, I unconsciously exclaimed aloud, "Miss Ashton !" The sound apparently reached her ear ; for she started up, looked hurriedly around, seemed to listen for a few seconds, then placed the book in the desk, snuffed out one of the candles, took up the other, and quitted the apartment.

My first impulse was to arouse my fellow travellers and communicate to them what I had just observed ; but I knew not their apartments, and every person in the inn was in bed. Reflecting, also, that no advantage could be taken of the discovery at this late hour, I determined to wait until morning, and then to inform Mordaunt and Oatlands of what I had observed, and to concert with them measures for obtaining an interview with Miss Ashton.

In vain I tried to sleep—the occurrences of the evening kept possession of my thoughts. The singular position in which Mr. Mordaunt was placed had not before particularly struck me. It was true that Caroline Ashton had been carried off by stratagem—it was apparently as true that she had made no effort to throw off her bondage, if it was really

such ; and, therefore, it was questionable how far we were authorized to make any attempt to rescue her. I had never, for an instant, doubted that a sincere attachment existed between Mr. Mordaunt and Miss Ashton. I knew, even, that she had made a disclosure of her sentiments to her Aunt ; and that these were favorable to the wishes of the Clergyman ; yet, in any other affairs than those of love, it might have been reasonably enquired, how could this happen ? They had known each other far too short a time to appreciate character ; and the image of the object of a prior attachment was still cradled in the heart of Mr. Mordaunt, when he first met Miss Ashton. But there is no reasoning upon matters of love, whether they are directed by chance, as some, or by necessity, as others, suppose. If Mr. Mordaunt had never previously felt the tender passion, it would not have been wonderful that he should be smitten by such beauty and attractions as Providence had bestowed on Caroline Ashton, and should fall in love as suddenly as occasionally happens. Even with the image of another still vivid in his imagination, to plunge again into such an ocean of contingency, and get beyond his depth—or, farther, to become so entangled as to place both his

health and his life in jeopardy, in attempting to counteract the event which had separated him from the object of this second attachment, was not inexplicable. Like other wounded parts, the heart which has been once perforated by the blind archer is more exposed and more yielding to future attacks. The mental telescope through which the victim gazes, also, obscures the past in dense and most oblivious mists, whilst it gilds the future with the brightest sunshine, and spreads over it that enchantment which distance always lends to the view. So far the condition of Mr. Mordaunt's heart could be readily accounted for; but why Caroline Ashton, with all the loveliness and innocence of youth, with a natural high and forward spirit, a deeply cultivated mind, with refinement, and the most delicate simplicity, could be inveigled and so fascinated by the addresses of a man old enough to be her father, as to proceed willingly with him, defied explanation. Had there been opportunity for casting the snares which often entrap woman, however well judging and discerning in other respects, to listen to overtures which, on any other subject, she would spurn, the solution of the mystery, involving the submission of Miss Ashton to the individual

who had carried her off, might have been solved. The selfishness of the sex too often renders a woman credulous—blind—and chains her ear to the most incongruous addresses: the gilding of fortune, the splendour of rank, the incense of flattery, throw a halo around the suitor who is a fool, or a dotard; the disqualifications of the man, in intellect or in moral worth; great disparity of age; even with another and more suitable object moving within the orbit of her affection; all give place; they become as a grain of sand in the balance, if the selfishness of the female bosom is to decide whether love or the advantages of rank and fortune shall prevail, when both are placed in competition. But no such opportunity had been opened to the individual in question; he had no means of clouding the understanding, or blinding the discernment, or chilling the natural affections of Caroline Ashton. How then was her conduct to be accounted for? A thousand explanatory conjectures might be hazarded, and not one to the point: it could not be decided by the most attentive consideration of the event in all its bearings; I therefore relinquished the attempt in despair, cherishing the expectation of having some part of the mystery resolved on the following morning,

by obtaining, if possible, an interview with the lady herself.

The best resolutions are often frustrated. It was my intention to be astir as early as possible, in order to communicate my discovery to my friends, and devise means to procure an interview with Miss Ashton. I was, however, still in bed, in an imperfect slumber—a half-dreaming state,—for the sun had already risen high, and had shot his beams through my curtains,—when Boots tapped at the door of my apartment and announced that “breakfast was ready, and that the other gentlemen were waiting.” I was shocked at the intelligence, and, finishing my toilette with unusual alacrity, I hurried into the breakfast room.

The effect of my communication upon Mr. Mordaunt may be readily conceived. It was determined that we should instantly proceed to the lodging on the opposite side of the street:—in two minutes we were at the door. After knocking violently three times with the hand, for there was no knocker, a raw, awkward-looking servant girl appeared, and demanded what we wanted.

“Is Mr. —, Mr. —, — eh!” said the Advocate, expecting to illicit the name of the lodger from the girl, “is Mr. — at home?”

“What’s ye’re wull?” asked the girl, with a look of suspicion, evidently excited by the earnestness which was conspicuously displayed on the face of each of us.

“I mean, my dear!” again demanded the Advocate, endeavouring to remove suspicion by pouring honied words in the ear of the bare-footed Venus—“I mean Mr. ——; you know—the old gentleman, who with a young lady has been living here for three days past; is he at home?”

“Did you want to see him, Sur?” enquired the damsel, in the true, national interrogatory style.

“Yes, my dear!” rejoined the Advocate; “either the old gentleman or the young lady.”

“Weel, you see, Sir!” said she, still holding the door only half ajar, and blocking up the opening with her person, “that canna be, as they baith gaid aff this morning at five o’clock!”

“You don’t mean to say so?” exclaimed Mr. Mordaunt, laying his hand on the arm of the girl.

“Do ye really think I wad tell a lie about naithing, and get naithing for it either?—Na! na! Sir! ye dinna ken me. Maybe ye hae some particular business wi’ the gentleman?”

what a pity ye could nae have come yestreen !” We looked at one another as much as to say, what is to be done ? The gawky damsel had discernment enough to perceive our dilemma, and chimed in the consolatory remark—

“ Aweel, Sirs, it canna be helpit.”

“ Tell me, my good girl !” rejoined the Advocate, slipping a sovereign into her hand as he spoke—“ what was the name of the gentleman ?”

“ Faix ! that taks telling,” responded the damsel ; “ and I ken whan to speak and whan to laud my tongue : ye’ve got a’ out o’ me that ye wull get—so gude morn.”

She proceeded to shut the door ; but the Advocate, resisting her effort, enquired if she knew where the parties were gone ?

The girl, after eying him with a most significant leer, burst into a loud laugh, and replied—“ I ken nae mair than this door whare they are gain ; and if I ken’d, I wad nae tell you. I opine by a’ this,” looking at the sovereign, “ ye intend nae gude to the honest man ;” and, in saying this, she slapped the door in our faces.

It was evident that the girl had been largely bribed to secrecy ; and as evident that we could gain nothing more by farther parlance ;

we therefore returned to the inn, and, having determined to pursue our original course, we ordered the horses, breakfasted, and, in a few minutes afterwards, were on our road to York.

Although the Advocate bantered me on the profoundness of my slumbers, yet, Mr. Mor-daunt remained silent ; his thoughts were otherwise engaged. He felt the conviction almost forced upon him that Caroline Ashton was a willing victim, if that term could be applied to her at all ; that no escape from her thralldom had been attempted ; that compulsion was not even requisite to retain her with the companion of her flight. As these ideas passed through his mind, he meditated on the propriety of withdrawing his pretensions to the affections of Miss Ashton—he had no right to control them. It was true that he had displayed sufficiently his preference for her, to have made her fully aware of his intentions, and his advances had not been repelled ; but he had made no formal declaration of his sentiments ; and he only heard incidentally from Mrs. Standard an assurance that they were reciprocal—intelligence which the wishes of his heart had, in his present opinion, led him too hastily to credit. He almost argued himself into the belief that the preference which Miss

Ashton had shewn for his society, the blushes which suffused her radiant countenance when her eye met his, the devotion with which she seemed to receive every opinion which he advanced, might be referred to that artificial politeness now so generally cultivated, and which veils so completely the genuine feelings of the heart, as to render it nearly impossible to separate truth from fiction, in intercourse with the more refined portion of womankind. He recalled to mind the events of the last evening they had met—he could not think that he was not mistaken in supposing that the sincerity with which his heart worshiped the idol of his devotion, would still be rewarded. He could not forego the hope that he was not to be again snatched from happiness, and doomed to dwell only in memory upon blessings too pure and hallowed for him to enjoy. He could not harbour the idea that duplicity could dwell in the bosom of Caroline Ashton ; he even blushed inwardly that his mind for a moment should be open to such a thought. Perplexed with conjectures, tormented with doubts, crushed in spirit, but still unchanged in the ardour of his affection ; feeling at one moment despair entering his heart ; at another, hope prophetically lifting his eye to a brighter future, breaking the clouds

of his despair, but not sufficient to rouse him, nor to subdue the despondency which had settled upon his soul. Although the Advocate and I guessed what was passing in his thoughts, and the former had long regarded his friend as an incorrigible enthusiast, yet we judged it most advisable neither to interfere, nor to attempt to disturb the train of his reflections, but to proceed as rapidly in our journey as possible.

We passed, unnoticed, the romantic magnificence of the castle and cathedral of Durham, regardless of the tomb of the venerable Bede ; stopped only to change horses at York ; and, like the Flying Dutchman, left Doncaster, Grantham, and Stamford behind us disregarded. Our progress indeed was as rapid as four horses, guided by postillions paid in the ratio of the velocity of their driving, could convey us : we saw nothing of the fugitives ; and, late in the evening of the second day, the red glare, reflected from the sky, which at night betokens from afar the approach to the great metropolis, the emporium of the world, spread before us.

With that freedom which the Editor has already taken in altering the arrangement of the matter in the Journal of his deceased friend,

he shall here leave the travellers, and carry the reader back to the party who were waiting with anxiety in the Scotch metropolis for letters from the Doctor and his companions, which were to regulate their future movements.

CHAPTER VII.

" The home, where thoughtless and serene,
 My heart slept peaceful as an inland lake :
 Though few my wants, pure joys were ever round me."

SCHILLER.

TIME passed heavily with the party at Cameron's, although the kind-hearted artist exerted himself to lighten the load of anxiety which oppressed the spirits of all, whilst the fate of Caroline Ashton was yet involved in mystery. In conducting them over the romantic scenery around the Scottish metropolis, it was evident that Mr. Sketchly was an universal favourite, that he was regarded as a species of public property, and was so highly valued, that every gate opened for his admission ; and every hospitable board was instantly spread for his comfort, and that of his friends, wherever he appeared.

The popularity of Mr. Sketchly, however, was not of that description which, too often, is sought for in the vanity of distinction for

either real or imaginary talents, which is held on the weakest tenure, being frequently awarded by the caprice of fashion, and as quickly withdrawn on the appearance of any new candidate for admiration ; and which not unusually terminates in the wreck of happiness and of peace of mind. The popularity of the artist was not raised on the talent displayed in the productions of his pencil, although of the highest description of art—poetry embodied by painting—but it was the tribute to private virtue, to the most delicate sense of propriety, to real benevolence, and to unaffected kindness of heart.

On one of these occasions, Mr. Sketchly carried the party to the seat of Mr. Oatlands, on the brow of one of the hills forming the amphitheatre amidst which the modern Athens rises. This visit awakened in their bosoms a new sentiment of friendship for the comely, warm-hearted better half of the Advocate, whose delight seemed to rest on descanting on the merits of her excellent husband, and in dealing out that hospitality which she well knew, had he been at home, would have been lavished upon the Veteran and his party. In shewing them over the grounds, Mr. Sketchly became animated in the praise of his friend.

“ It is here,” said he, after having led them,

through walks bordered with flowers and flowering shrubs, to a noble terrace, constructed on the declivity of the mountain, fenced by a living wall of holly, and commanding one of the most magnificent views in the world,—“it is here that my friend retires from the crowded arena, where his genius predominates, and his eloquence soothes or awes the assembled multitude. There he is the energetic orator ; here, in these delightful recesses of private life, he is the warm friend, the affectionate husband, and the indulgent parent ; there he exults in his gift of fascinating the minds of men, and moulding their opinions, by the sweetness of his persuasive rhetoric ; or hurrying them on to the conclusions which he desires, by the overpowering torrent of his commanding oratory : here he finds a more satisfactory and permanent source of happiness, in the exercise of his taste in improving his grounds, and in the indulgence of his social affections. Devoid of pride or of affectation, gay, even boyish in the buoyancy and simplicity of his heart, his aim is to enjoy life in its meridian, leaving others to squabble for power, or struggle to acquire and to hoard wealth for an imaginary future.”

“ By Gad ! Mr. Sketchly ! ” said the Vete-

ran, charmed with the warmth with which this eulogy was delivered, “none can deny the truth of the remark which you have just uttered. Wealth and fame, the chief objects of life with many, seem to me like the piquets of an enemy, driven in by the main guard of the opposing army, always a day’s march a head of it; and, if it be at length taken, not worth the trouble of the capture.”

It was after one of these expeditions, in which the party had traced the rich banks of the Esk from Roslyn, to the cottage of the amiable, benevolent, and learned Professor of oriental literature in the University of the modern Athens, one of the brightest ornaments of the Scotch church, and had relished his goosberry pie and ginger wine after their walk, that the little coterie was assembled in the drawing room, at Cameron’s, over a cup of coffee. The singular beauty of the architecture, the unequalled richness of the sculpture and tracery in Roslyn chapel, — each striking point in the romantic scenery of the banks of the river, had been amply commented on by Miss Standard and the artist: Aunt Bridget had expressed her horror of the dungeons under Hawthornden: and the Cantab described

to Mrs. Standard, as she performed the duties of the tea-table, the obvious development of the organ of benevolence in the head of the venerable Professor at whose cottage they had lunched. The Veteran was seated apart from the group, in a lounging position, with one leg crossed upon the other, and both outstretched, his elbows resting upon the arms of the chair, his hands locked in one another, and his eyes raised to the ceiling, although evidently not contemplating any thing there, lost in a reverie on the superiority of the modern over the ancient profession of arms.

“ Their defences were miserable,” said he, thinking aloud ; “ their whole system of warfare was brutal : mere corporeal strength triumphed over moral courage and heroic bearing ; and he who could give and could bear the hardest blows was certain of victory. A man,” continued he, turning round and addressing Mr. Sketchly—“ a man in chain or in scale armour, with his helmet and his vizor, with his lance, or his battle-axe, with his horse, with its corselet and caparisons, look well in a picture, my good friend ! but he is of no other use.”

He was proceeding to illustrate his remark,

when the waiter entered and presented him with a letter.

“ It arrived in the morning,” said the man, “ but was by some accident neglected to be delivered.”

“ I know nothing more vexatious than negligence of this description :—to a commercial man it might prove ruinous of fortune ; to a lawyer, the loss of a client ; life and death might depend upon it as far as regards the physician ; it might bring upon a lover the frown of a mistress ; on a married man, the clamour of his wife ; indeed to most men, a letter, like a newspaper, should be wet when it is opened, otherwise it loses half its interest. It is only to the unfortunate debtor, from an inexorable creditor, or to an author tasked to a day by an importunate publisher, or to the profligate heir of a penurious uncle, that a letter is always in time. The Veteran treated it with indifference.

“ By Gad !” he exclaimed, however, starting up from his position and breaking the seal, “ I am much mistaken if it is not from Caroline. It has made a *détour* to Loch Katrine, and is redirected by the hand of the landlady.”

Every one was on the tiptoe of expectation : it was indeed from Miss Ashton ; and the

Colonel, having wiped his spectacles, read it aloud, as follows :

“ MY EVER DEAREST UNCLE !

“ No words can convey to you an idea of the agony of mind which I have suffered, in reflecting upon the anxiety which you and my dearest Aunt, and Letitia, must have experienced from the extraordinary event which separated me from you. It can only be equalled by the astonishment which you will experience, in hearing me acknowledge that, if I can find happiness, under any circumstances, absent from the dearest and the best of relations, to whom I owe every blessing which has been my lot in this world, I am comparatively happy.”

At the conclusion of this paragraph, the ladies looked at one another with an expression of the greatest surprise : Miss Standard cast her eyes upon the ground and seemed wrapped in thought ; Aunt Bridget half rose from her chair, spread out her lustring, and unfurled her fan ; whilst Mrs. Standard, raising her hand to twirl one of her curls, a custom which always indicated some unusual train of reflection pass-

ing through her mind, ejaculated the word “indeed!” For a minute, the Veteran dropped his hand, which held the letter, upon his knee: exchanged a look with Mrs. Standard, then took a pinch of snuff, wiped again his spectacles, and, without making any remark, recommenced the perusal of the letter.

“Duncan, whose gallant conduct I can never sufficiently admire, nor ever forget, and I hope to be able sometime to reward him for it—”

“Alas! poor fellow!” said the Veteran, pausing for a moment to collect himself, for his lip slightly quivered as he read the lines—“he is beyond any reward which this world can bestow, but he will receive it elsewhere”—and he again began the paragraph.

“Duncan, whose gallant conduct I can never sufficiently admire, nor ever forget, and I hope to be able sometime to reward him for it, would inform you of the manner in which I was carried off. I was no sooner lifted into the carriage than I fainted, and became perfectly unconscious of every thing which passed, until we were near to Callander, when I recovered and found myself seated between two gentlemen. One of them was an elderly man, the individual who had seized me:

the other, a person whom I had observed several times pass us in the 'Trosachs, and whose look seemed to me to express something like a compassionate interest in my fate. The hand of the elderly gentleman held mine; and, when he perceived that I had recovered, he entreated me to be composed, and to rest assured that nothing was intended which would not contribute to my comfort and happiness. I looked at him with horror, and said nothing; turning to the other gentleman, I entreated him, for Heaven's sake! to inform me where they were conveying me, and for what purpose I was thus torn from my relations. I would have given the world for a flood of tears to relieve my anguish, but I could not cry. My temples throbbed, and my forehead burned as if my brain were on fire: the light was too much for my eyes; I closed them, and then felt that my mind was wandering—that I was becoming delirious. It was in vain that I strove to collect my thoughts; I have been since informed that I had a kind of fit, which greatly alarmed my companions, but I was unconscious of it. In my delirium, I imagined that I was again with you and my dearest Aunt and Letitia: that I was ill and in bed; that you and my Aunt were sitting beside me, and dear Aunt Bridget

and Letitia were bending over me, bathing my burning head with cold water. There was another person, whom I need not name, also present. He looked ill and dejected ; but the same open, frank, intelligent expression shone through his melancholy ; the same graceful, delicate, and attentive demeanour which attracted my attention, and first impressed me with a sentiment till then a stranger to my bosom, was now displayed. He gazed upon me with an expression at once anxious, compassionate, and encouraging. I strove to speak, but could give no utterance to my thoughts : I struggled violently to accomplish it, but could not. At once you all, save him, seemed to leave me ; whilst a complete tumult of images and events passed rapidly through my brain ; one vivid picture of the past succeeding another like lightning ; in all, the same well-known countenance was never absent.

“ I continued in this state for nearly two days ; and, when I recovered my consciousness, I found myself in bed, in a strange apartment, with the finger of a physician upon my pulse, and a young woman standing near him. I enquired where I was ; for all that had occurred had passed away like a dream. The doctor informed me that I was in Edinburgh, that I had

been very ill, and that I was still in a condition which required quiet and repose. I conjured him to inform me whether I could see you and my dear Aunt, for the fact of our separation had completely escaped from my mind ; yet, it was difficult to reconcile the circumstance of being in Edinburgh, when I believed that I had, only a few hours before, been at the Trosachs. The worthy Doctor, as he took his leave, pressed my hand gently, and assured me, if I remained quiet, I should soon be sufficiently well to see anybody.

“ The young woman staid by me, and and did every thing to render me comfortable, anticipating my little wants and nursing me with the utmost assiduity and tenderness ; but I could obtain no information respecting my situation, except that I was in one of the first hotels in Edinburgh with a near relation, who would see me as soon as the Doctor should give permission for the interview. I tortured my poor brain, to no purpose, in conjecturing who this relation could be. I finally concluded that it must be you, my dearest Uncle, for I knew no other near relation in this world, although I could not comprehend why I was prevented from then seeing you. I remembered, however, your remark, that “ time

flows with a steady current, and the woes of the most wretched must sooner or later terminate," and I bore up as well as I could. The day passed away ; and, by the aid of an anodyne which the good Doctor prescribed for me, I enjoyed a night of refreshing sleep, and awoke, apparently well, on the following morning ; so that I was up and dressed when the Physician paid his visit. He found me so much better that he proposed a change of apartment ; and, lending me his arm, he conducted me into a drawing room on the same floor ; where, after having chatted for a few minutes, he rose and left me.

“ When alone, my thoughts instantly recurred to the events of the few preceding days : —the cloud of mystery which hung over them ; the obscurity which veiled the future ;—my utter ignorance of every thing connected with my present situation, perplexed my mind ; and I sickened with conjecture. I was seated upon the sofa, with my forehead resting upon my hand, when the door gently opened, and a tall, elderly gentleman, with a military air, entered. Although his hair was grey, yet, none of the other symptoms of age were obvious on his erect and manly form ; he smiled ; but the keen glance of his bright hazel eyes seemed to penetrate to my very soul. I gazed at him, and im-

mediately recognized him as the person who had forced me into the carriage. Oh! my dear Uncle, conceive what were then my feelings! The idea instantly flashed upon my mind that I was destined to be the victim of the dishonourable sentiments of this old man, and that I was completely in his power. A cold shudder came over my frame. I rose from my seat; shrieked aloud,—‘help! help!’ and was in the act of rushing to the door, when he hastily advanced, and, taking both my hands gently, yet firmly, constrained me to be again seated. He then drew a chair near to the sofa and sat down. In spite of the terror which shook me, with a degree of courage which, you know, is foreign to my nature, I felt emboldened to speak. ‘Why have you brought me here? by what authority do you detain me? Young and inexperienced as I am, my acquaintance with the world is sufficient to inform me that the step which you have taken is illegal, and will meet the punishment it merits.’

“The stern look which he gave me in reply was mingled with a satirical expression, allied to surprise, at my boldness; and, although he smiled, yet, the steadfastness of his gaze in an instant dissipated all my determination; my spirit shrunk under it; and, dropping upon my knees, I supplicated him to take pity upon

my helplessness, and to restore me to my friends. As the old man raised me, his sternness seemed to dissolve :—as he looked in my face, and a smile, no longer of contempt or of satire, but of kindness, seemed to play upon his lips ; and, again reseating me, he replied—

“ ‘ You have a right to put these questions, and it is unnecessary to delay answering them : my authority is that which a parent possesses over his child. Miss Atkinson, for Ashton is your mother’s name, not yours, you see before you one, perhaps, of the most blameable of men, but one who has suffered most severely for his errors—your father.’ ”

“ ‘ Gracious Heavens !’ I exclaimed ; and in an instant every thing in the room swam before my eyes, and I fainted. On recovering, I found the young woman, who had previously attended me, chafing my temples with eau de Cologne, and my father pacing the room with a countenance expressive of the greatest anxiety. On perceiving that I had revived, he advanced towards me, and, taking my hand, addressed me in the most soothing accents.’ ”

“ ‘ My dearest Caroline !’ he said—‘ I perceive that your nerves are not yet equal to the communication which I was prepared to make to you ; I shall leave you to the care of your

maid, and shall delay, until to-morrow, what I had to say.'

" 'No! no!' I exclaimed; 'do not leave me! do not go! you have awakened ideas in my mind which must be confirmed or instantly obliterated.'

" He regarded me for a few seconds, as if hesitating whether to go or to remain; then, beckoning to the young woman to withdraw, he placed a chair near me and again sat down.

" 'I have already informed you,' said he, holding my hand which he had again taken between both of his, 'that I am your father—a guilty and most blameable man; but, my dearest child! I have suffered all the pangs which remorse can inflict upon a conscience happily, at length, alive to a sense of crimes of which it most sincerely repents.'

" I gazed at him intensely as he spoke: there was an austerity, softened down by an expression of settled melancholy, in his look, which forcibly arrested my attention; a new feeling arose in my bosom: I was disposed to throw myself into his arms, yet my desire was restrained by doubts which I could not overcome. I believed—hesitated—and again believed. I wished to speak, but my tongue seemed as if glued to the roof of my mouth;

my heart beat violently—I breathed short—I tried to speak, it was in vain—and I sate gazing upon him in silent, almost stupid astonishment. He quickly perceived what was passing in my mind.

“ ‘ Your doubts,’ he remarked, ‘ are natural ; they shall be dissipated in an instant ;’ and, unfolding a paper which I had not previously perceived in his hand, ‘ there,’ continued he, ‘ is the certificate of my marriage with your much-injured mother.’

“ Mother ! I uttered. The word fell upon my ear like a spell :—my whole frame trembled ; and I must have fallen, had not my eyes been eagerly directed to the document which was to dispel the doubts which still settled on my mind. ‘ The certificate was dated at Langholme, the year previous to my birth, and was signed, “ Henry Martin, minister.” I gazed on the paper and on my father alternately.

“ ‘ Yes, my beloved child !’ he proceeded, ‘ this is the proof of our relationship, of my union with your mother, whose fostering care you have never known ; whose bosom had scarcely heaved with the breath of maternal tenderness before you were taken from her—who would not now recognize her offspring—who has never heard you speak.’

“ He paused : as he held my hand, I felt a tremor pass over him ; he forcibly compressed his lips ; and, whilst he gazed stedfastly in my face, his eyes glistened through the moisture which suffused them. Oh ! my dearest uncle ! how can I tell you the condition of my heart at that moment ?—suffocated—I gasped for breath !

“ ‘ Tell me,’ I exclaimed, scarcely able to articulate my words, and grasping his arm with my freed hand, ‘ tell me, does my mother still live ? where is she ?—shall, oh ! shall I ever feel her arms around me ? shall I see—shall I—’

“ I staggered, for I had risen from the sofa as I spoke ; and I fainted on my father’s neck. I was revived by his tears falling fast upon my hand, which he pressed to his lips ; I could no longer doubt :—every word which he had uttered sunk to my heart, and found a resting place there. ‘ I believe—I believe—it is enough—guilty or innocent—yes ! you are my father—I am your child,’ I exclaimed, and sunk upon his bosom : he folded me in his arms, and we both wept aloud.”

The worthy Veteran laid the letter upon the table, took off his spectacles, passed the fore-fingers of his right hand rapidly across his

eyes, and stretched out his left to his daughter, who had edged her chair close to his, during the perusal of her cousin's narrative. She and Aunt Bridget were in tears; and both the kind-hearted artist and the Cantab were much affected; Mrs. Standard alone did not appear to feel the situation which her niece had so vividly described; perhaps a strong sense of her sister's wrongs overpowered the natural feelings of that lady:—I cannot hazard an opinion upon the subject. It is, nevertheless, a curious fact, that, whilst women are far from being ready to throw a veil over the frailties of their erring sisters, but, on the contrary, are the most rigorous of their judges, they are equally implacable and unforgiving of any injuries which they suffer from the opposite sex. The retrospect of Mrs. Standard's knowledge of her brother-in-law was tinged with the deepest disgust; his crimes rose before her in all the darkness of their midnight horrors; and therefore she could not see, in the future, a single ray of hope, however apparently sincere his contrition. To return from this digression, in a few minutes, the Colonel resumed the perusal of the letter.

“ I will not, my dearest Uncle, fatigue you by writing the narrative of my father's story,

with the details of which you must be familiar ; namely, the origin of his acquaintance with my unhappy mother, her elopement and marriage, my birth, and the melancholy events which separated me so early from her. Suffice it to say that my father has informed me that, for several years, he has ardently desired to throw himself at her feet, and to implore her forgiveness for his errors ; but all his efforts, either to obtain an interview with her, or to effect a reconciliation, have hitherto failed. He feels that his object can only be fulfilled through my means ; and that is the apology which he has to offer for gaining possession of me in the manner which he employed. To the question why he had not made his wishes known to you, he assured me that he had corresponded with you on the subject, but that you refused to give me up. ‘ The destiny,’ said he, in replying to my question, ‘ which made your Uncle and myself implacable enemies, was augmented in force by exaggerated and hostile reports of guilt, which prevented us from ever meeting ; for we could not have met without sentiments being expressed on both sides, which might have led to an event capable of involving both in irrevocable misery. We belong to a profession which admits of only one appeal for the indig-

nity even of a word ; and grey-headed experience has taught me that where relations are concerned discretion is the better part of valour. I had, therefore, no alternative but to gain possession of you in any way ; and, although I regret the distress it has occasioned to you, yet, I hail the success of the plot as the day-spring of a short gleam of happiness, which may dispel, at the close of life, the sombre clouds which have shaded too many years of its meridian.'

" I strongly petitioned to be permitted to write to you, but the reply of my father was— ' I have strong reasons for restraining you from doing so at present : in due time you shall have the opportunity of informing your Uncle of every thing which has occurred ; but this is not the proper moment for such a communication.' You will, therefore, my dearest Uncle ! perceive the cause of my silence ; and you will cease to wonder at not having sooner heard from me.

" The day after this conversation with my unhappy parent, we left Edinburgh, and proceeded to Melrose, where, instead of stopping in the inn, we went to a lodging which had been previously taken for us. We were three days in Melrose, being detained by the sudden indisposition of my father, on which account I

rarely walked out. We had visited the ruins on the afternoon of our arrival ; but I was eager to examine them at that time which Sir Walter Scott describes as the best. On the third night, therefore, after my father retired to bed, I threw a warm shawl over my shoulders, and issued out, alone, at eleven o'clock. I think I see my dear Aunt holding up her hands at the boldness of her indiscreet niece ; and the result made me almost repent my temerity. The principal street of the little town was completely deserted ; every door was closed ; every candle out, and the inhabitants were already asleep, when I entered the church-yard ; and, walking over the graves, placed myself in the most favourable situation to see the interior of the ruin through the great window.

“ It was my intention to take only the most hurried look ; but, as my feet were riveted to the spot by the magnificence of the ruin, softened by the light of the moon, hung in an unclouded sky, half an hour elapsed before I even thought of the singularity of the situation in which I was standing. At length, my attention was roused by a light appearing within the Abbey, and the sound of voices. The silence without was such that I could hear every sentence which was uttered. I heard

the girl, who was shewing the ruin to the strangers, whoever they were, describing my visit two days before : I thought, my dearest Uncle, that I heard the voice of one who is ever nearest to my thoughts ; and I listened with breathless expectation, but the voices ceased. In a few minutes, the key turned in the door which opens into the church-yard ; I dreaded to be observed ; but I had only to fly to a corner, beneath the shade of some trees, where I stood concealed. One person only, of three who came out, remained ; it was not him whom I expected to see. He placed himself on the very spot which I had left. I held my breath lest it should betray my presence ; and it was not until I thought that his attention was completely abstracted, by the object upon which he was gazing, that I ventured from my retreat, and hurried along a gravel walk that leads out of the church-yard. I had scarcely reached the stile, which opens into the street, when, glancing round, I perceived I was followed. Fear, however, gave celerity to my flight ; and, in a few minutes, I re-entered the little parlour, where I had left the candles burning. You may conceive, but I cannot describe, the trepidation which seized me, on finding myself secure.”

“What an escape from such an act of imprudence!” said Mrs. Standard.

“Poor dear Caroline!” said Letitia.

“An escape indeed! I should have died of fright! to be pursued by a man at that time of night! The very thought makes my blood run cold,” chimed in Aunt Bridget.

“By Gad! you might have walked quietly home, Biddy,” coolly remarked the Veteran; and he went on with the perusal of the letter.

“We left Melrose at five o’clock the next morning, and arrived in London on the third day afterwards, without any incident worthy of notice. My father has displayed to me the utmost kindness; and it is by his permission that I now write to you. I try to love him, for every thing he does has a view to my happiness: but there is a sternness in his look, which even his smile cannot veil, and which checks my approaches. How often! how very often! my dearest Uncle! do I seem to see your kind and open, benevolent countenance gazing upon me; and then I dream of home. Alas!—I have not yet learnt to know any other home.

“My father has informed me that we shall proceed to Ghent, where he understands my mother is now residing, if she be alive; and he

expects, through my interference, to be again united to her.

“ I cannot say more, my dearest Uncle ! than to assure you and my beloved Aunt that, were it possible for me to be happy absent from you, to believe myself at home—can I call that place home where you are not ?—I am happy. Tell dearest Letitia that I now feel the truth of that sentiment she has so often expressed, but which I have never before understood, that no friendship, no connection in life, produces feelings in the mind equivalent to those of parent and child. Do remember me, most warmly, to all our fellow travellers : need I mention one in particular ? Adieu ! my ever dearest Uncle ! My prayer—my hope, is to bring you and my father amicably together.

“ Heaven bless you, my dearest Uncle !

“ Your unalterably affectionate niece,

“ CAROLINE.”

The artist and the Cantab soon took their leave ; and the letter of Miss Atkinson became the subject of discussion for the remainder of the evening. The eccentric character of Colonel Atkinson was considered as sufficient to account for the means he had adopted to gain possession of his daughter. Every one now

hoped that the pursuing party would not encounter the fugitives ; the Veteran, in particular, dreaded any collision of the two parties. It was finally determined that the family should immediately leave Edinburgh for the metropolis ; and thence proceed to Ghent, where they expected to arrive before the pursuers could gain intimation of Colonel Atkinson's intention of crossing to Belgium.

The feelings of the Veteran towards Colonel Atkinson were those of a generous and high-minded gentleman. He had never seen his brother-in-law ; he knew his character only by report ; but the injuries which Atkinson had heaped upon his unhappy wife had aroused sentiments of disgust towards him in the mind of the Veteran ; and, until he could be assured that his niece would not be exposed to the dangers which he feared would be her fate under the roof of her father, he could not consent to part with her. His sentiments, however, were altered when he learned his brother-in-law's anxiety for a reconciliation with his wife, if it should appear that she was still alive : for, although he could not regard her as altogether blameless, yet, he justly considered that any trivial errors of conduct, on her part, were more than sufficiently punished by what she

had suffered. He had no personal dislike to his brother-in-law, and he was even ignorant of the extent of his misconduct. He knew, however, that Colonel Atkinson had never enquired after his daughter, nor expressed any interest in her fate, until she had attained the age of womanhood; and as he had no certainty that his sister-in-law was still alive, and as he feared that the female society into which his niece might be thrown would not be that fitted to insure the happiness of a young woman entering into life, he had resisted every attempt of Atkinson to regain possession of his daughter.

Mrs. Standard judged Atkinson more severely than the Veteran; she suspected the sincerity of any change in his character and conduct: she regarded him as a person indelibly stamped with the brand of vice. On the mention even of his name, the injury done to her sister arose to her mental eye in all its original magnitude: she could never forgive him; she regarded him as a contemptible voluptuary: and she shuddered to think upon the influence which his society, and his associates, might have upon the hitherto untainted mind of her niece.

But, however opposite the opinions of the Veteran and Mrs. Standard were upon the re-

formation, as they termed it, of Colonel Atkinson, they agreed in the necessity of instantly proceeding to London; and, if necessary, to Ghent. The following morning was fixed upon for their departure. The necessary arrangements for that purpose had been fully canvassed, and the party was about to retire for the night, when Mr. Sketchly entered with a letter from Mr. Mordaunt. It ran as follows:

“ My dear Sketchly,

“ We arrived at the Clarendon last night at ten o'clock, after a rapid and unsatisfactory journey, at least unsatisfactory as far as regards the object we had in view. What will you think when I inform you that we were twelve hours in Melrose, while Miss Ashton was living in the opposite house without our knowing it? and yet, since that time, we have not been able to gain the smallest information respecting her.

“ I am puzzled what to think. My mind is on the rack of suspense, I may almost say of despair. At one time, I feel excited to a degree which would lead me not only to pursue the spoiler of my happiness to the end of the world, but even to lay aside my sacred calling, and punish the miscreant in a way which it proscribes: at another, I find myself asking the

question, is it possible that he has been able to work upon the affections of Miss Ashton? The extraordinary fact of her willing sojournment with him has reached our ears wherever we have heard any tidings of her. How can this be explained? If she has made her election, what right have I to interfere in her choice? I cannot answer. My wishes—my thoughts—my recollections—my dreams—my hopes, persuade me that I have a right; but my cooler reason denies the correctness of the decision. I have never declared myself directly to Miss Ashton: she is disengaged as far as regards me; and, if she has been fascinated into so incongruous an union, as I presume it must be, if report speak true of the age of the person who has presumed on so extraordinary a mode of obtaining her hand, again I say—what right have I to interfere? Her docile, pliant, and grateful nature might be worked upon by kindness: long, attentive, and endearing kindness might draw from her a return of love, even to one labouring under all the disadvantage of disparity of years; but, in this case, it is impossible: attraction—sentiment—heart—are not there: she has not given her affection to the individual who has carried her off—she must be re-created ere that can happen.

“ Sketchily, how I envy your free, unfettered condition! Your art, your enviable, creative pencil engrosses your whole soul—you have no time to be wretched. I am completely—perhaps deservedly so. Like soap bubbles, scarcely blown before they burst, have been all my resolutions: often manly, but deficient in the bone and muscle which give stability, they have melted away: in a word, my flexibility has been my bane; I have never enjoyed life with discretion, nor perhaps have ever pursued the path best suited to my temperament. The death of Lonisa Manvers drove me from the army: I settled down into a churchman, and formed the determination to remain single, and to be wedded only to literature and my clerical duties. I had planned my career, and fancied myself steeled against temptation. The accident which threw me into the society of Colonel Standard and his family only proved that experience of its dangers had not changed the pliability of my nature. I saw Caroline Ashton, and, for the first time, since my heart knew the poignancy of that grief which it had too fondly nurtured, I felt an irresistible interest in another:—still I thought myself secure. The image of her whom I had lost was my boasted pride, my consolation; the child of my

imagination, cradled in my heart, I neither dreamt nor thought of, nor could admit any other. But human resolution is surpassed by human weakness. The intelligence, the noble frankness, the gentle, feminine virtues of Miss Ashton soon secured my esteem and admiration; happy, perhaps, would it have been had they touched no other chord—awakened no other sentiment: but the sternest philosopher, my dear Sketchly, sometimes finds that he has a heart in his bosom: his accumulated science—his metaphysical depth—his pride of intellect—his stoical coolness, are destined to do homage to the fascinating smile of beauty, and are compelled to own the divinity of its power. 'The delicious poison has entered my soul; nightly does my memory revert to that hour when my sentiments were almost involuntarily unveiled to Miss Ashton, although my tongue made no acknowledgment of my passion. It was on the little esplanade before the inn at Loch Kateran: the moon shone above us, and silvered the silent lake which spread below. Caroline hung upon my arm, and we continued our walk for sometime after the rest of the party had retired. 'The usual mirthful playfulness of my companion had given place to thoughtful calmness; her auburn ringlets parted on her open

forehead, although they half shaded her face as her eye rested upon the ground, yet could not wholly conceal the recurring blush which rose as the conversation touched the sympathetic chords of the heart. Warmed by the subject, as I painted to her the domestic bliss, the fireside paradise of my friend Manvers, and exclaimed how I longed to have the scattered feelings of my heart centered in such a focus, my hand insensibly fell upon her's—it trembled beneath my touch—I instinctively grasped it—she stopped short, as if to require an explanation—our eyes met—a blush suffused her countenance ;—but, in an instant, recovering her self-possession, she said, in a subdued tone of voice, “ Mr. Mordaunt, it is late, let us return.” Why did I not then declare myself ? I might hesitate to answer ; but both you and Manvers will recognize, as its origin, that indecision for which you have often lectured me, and from which I have too often suffered.

“ But, my dear Sketchly, I am filling my paper with the romance of sentiment, when I should be detailing to you the news of our journey. Hitherto, as I have said, our object has been frustrated. One thing, however, has been effected. Besides confirming all the ideas which I had formed of the warm, unso-

phisticated heart, good sense, and energy of character, of our joint friend Oatlands,—it has brought out, in the most engaging colours, that of the worthy Doctor. He is—†

* * * * *

“Sketchly, do not judge me by the romance of this epistle. Under any circumstances, it is not my intention to waste my manhood in the lap of indolence. When you visit me at the Rectory of Lonsdale, whether you find me the happy husband, enjoying the blessings of domestic quiet, or the solitary recluse, seeking my solace in friendship, expect to see me an active parish priest, labouring, I trust, worthily in my vocation, not only in the limited circle of my clerical duties, but striving to extend the sphere of my usefulness. I have ambition enough to hope that, by some effort, I may roll back the wave of oblivion from overwhelming my memory.

“Remember me to Colonel Standard and the ladies.

“Adieu! ever yours,

“FREDERICK MORDAUNT.”

† My friend the Doctor, with his inherent modesty, had so effaced the eulogy upon himself as to render it completely unintelligible.—EDITOR.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Sighing, as through the shadowy past,
 Like a tomb-searcher, Memory ran,
 Lifting each shroud that Time had cast
 O’er buried hopes.”—

MOORE.

FREDERICK MORDAUNT and his two friends had been already three days in London, without having advanced a single step towards the attainment of the object of their visit. They had not previously reflected that no where, when obscurity and concealment are desired, can a man bury himself so completely from the prying eye of notoriety as amidst the dense population of the metropolis. In that ever-flowing tide, that absorbing, mighty current, into whose channel the whole world pours its tributary streams of life, individuals, like drops falling upon the wave, instantly disappear. It was therefore less wonderful that the friends should lose all traces of the fugitives, than that they should stumble upon their path. Indeed, they had no clue for their guidance. At the hotels, elderly gentlemen and handsome young ladies were hourly arriving: the description of the

fugitives was too vague to enable any information to be obtained through the medium of the police, or the public offices: the pursuers were consequently constrained to trust to chance for that which could not be procured by any systematic plan of enquiry.

Mr. Mordaunt, on entering London, was again in the midst of a circle of acquaintance, whom he had known when the gay and handsome guardsman; by whom he had been courted and caressed, and who were still eager to hold out to him the hand of fellowship: but his spirits had sunk too low to allow him to relish any society; he even felt anxious to shun the recognition of those with whom he had formed real friendships, whom he loved and respected. He felt that the world had grown hateful to him; and, in the midst of the most crowded haunts of humanity under the canopy of heaven,—where the air is never still from “the busy hum of men”—the streets are never empty,—where no hour can be termed that of silence and repose,—did Frederick Mordaunt seek solitude and seclusion. He rarely left the hotel in the day-time: and, only after the shades of night began to be closed in, muffled up in his cloak, he strolled out around the neighbouring Squares, or occasionally into Hyde Park, to breathe a little fresh air, or to enjoy the soothing in-

fluence of the evening breeze upon his wasted and feverish cheek.

It was in one of these solitary rambles,—the dark-blue vault of heaven was studded with myriads of stars, reflected in the purple mirror of the Serpentine, dark and motionless, whilst the planets, undiminished by the absence of the moon, shone out with more than usual brilliancy, simulating little suns,—that Mr. Mor-daunt, sauntering along the walk between York and Cumberland gates, observed streams of light issuing from a mansion in Park Lane, and carriage after carriage setting down visitors. He paused for a few minutes, opposite to the house, to indulge a reflection, which had suggested itself to his mind. It referred to the pains with which mankind fly the true sources of happiness, to seek it in the artificial state of the feelings which were required to enjoy the gay scene before him: the fatigue and subsequent ennui which follow it; and the altogether unsatisfactory character of the pleasure which it affords, compared with that resulting from the contemplation of the beautiful and the sublime in natural scenery, and the peaceful associations of domestic life in the country. As he was gazing upon the brilliant equipages which crowded the street, he recollected that it was somewhere near this spot,

—if it were not really in the same house,—that Lord Rochdale lived. The recollections which this recognition brought forward, in all their freshness, before the mental eye of Mr. Mordaunt, were of the most painful description. Louisa Munvers stood before him—her last words, “ I know your heart is unaffected—is the same,” fell upon his ear ; whilst his reply—“ and it ever will be, dearest Louisa !” seemed to put the question, “ how has that assurance been fulfilled ?” Gloomily, and discontented with himself, he withdrew his eye from the house and walked onward : But in the human heart, as in heaven, there are many mansions : when the flame of affection is extinguished in one, it is lighted up in another ; the sincerest vows, sworn in the conviction that they are irrevocable, engraven on eternal adamant, yield to the touch of time, and every trace of them is effaced from the tablet of the memory. We justify ourselves by circumstances ; inclination pleads at the bar of conscience ; the judge dozes, and the culprit is acquitted. Frederick Mordaunt, although dissatisfied with the examination of his feelings, which the retrospect, forced upon him by this recognition, had produced, yet found an apology in the peculiarity of the circumstances in which the death of

Miss Manvers had placed him. He had quitted a profession which had tutored him for the excitements of society, and engendered habits the opposite of those which he had led since a parish priest. Daily experience had also taught him that he was not fitted for the life of a bachelor ; that even friendship, with all its charms, was an imperfect substitute for that reciprocal affection, that domestic bliss, which his fancy pictured, with the warmth of the highest poetic colouring, might have been his lot, had his anticipations not been blighted by the fate of her in whom all his earliest affections had centered. He had wisely sought his consolation, and found his solitude cheered, in the performance of his sacred duties ; and, whilst he spoke to others of the vanity of all things on this side of the grave, he himself had become wiser ; he had brought the instruction home to his own bosom, and profited by the lessons that he taught. The melancholy, however, which had settled upon his character still tinged all his feelings ; indeed, it had been fostered and kept alive by the almost hourly contemplation of the loss he had sustained : the gentle, feminine virtues of Louisa Manvers were ever vividly present in his mind : even amidst his growing affection for Miss

Ashton, he sometimes felt the iron of remorse entering his soul, as if the purity of the love which had been first awakened in it—that sole remaining spark of his divine origin in fallen man, unalloyed by the dross of passion—which is never kindled but once in the human bosom, had been sullied by a second attachment. In the present state of Mr. Mordaunt's feelings,—oppressed by the mystery which involved the fate of Miss Ashton,—stung by the doubts which had arisen in his mind respecting her sincerity,—his heart warmed again when these sentiments crowded upon his mind, and with the old associations, which the incident of seeing Lord Rochdale's mansion had called up. He stopped under a group of trees ; the stream of light from the windows of the gay mansion almost reached the spot where he stood ; and, in the shadows of the figures crossing and recrossing it, in the crowded drawing room, his fancy conjured up his friend Manvers, Lady Mary, and even the stately form of the Earl. He felt ashamed that he had not already sought them out ; and, resolving to retrieve his neglect as soon as possible, he walked on till he, almost instinctively, found himself on the threshold of the mansion. It was indeed Lord Rochdale's ; and, learning from a servant that Mr. Manvers

was in town, he left his card, with an intimation that he should call on the following day.

It had just struck ten o'clock ; the breakfast equipage, in a snug parlour in the Clarendon, was still on the table, Mr. Mordaunt was poring over the Morning Herald, and I, counting the number of advertisements in a double sheet of the Times,—Oatlands had set off early for the City,—when the door of the room was opened by a gentleman in black, who, advancing, ejaculated the word “Mordaunt !” The Clergyman raised his head—started from his seat—and in an instant his hand was locked in that of Dudley Manvers.

When the first salutations were over, and the burst of sterling friendship, which marked the meeting of these two excellent men, had subsided, and Mr. Mordaunt had introduced me to his friend, I listened with admiration to the unusually exalted tone of conversation which the occasion seemed to have created in the worthy Clergyman. I had often admired Mr. Mordaunt’s power of delineating character, and describing the places which he had visited ; but they were thrown into the shade by the animation which this meeting infused into his account of the events which had passed since the two friends had met, and the brilliant effects of the poetic

touchings of his pencil on the scenery of his northern tour, which he delineated with a minuteness demonstrative of the deep interest with which he had viewed them.

“ Your descriptions delight and interest me,” said Mr. Manvers : “ but, Frederick, tell me something of your rectory : is it still untenanted, except by its hermit-rector ?”

The countenance of Mr. Mordaunt fell, and a half-stilled sigh escaped from his breast. His friend instantly perceived that he had touched a vibrating cord, and changed the conversation.

“ You must come and see Lady Mary,” said he : “ you know, Frederick, you were always a favourite of the old lady, who is as great a valetudinarian as ever, living by system, and corresponding with her dear Doctor P——. The Earl left town for Rochdale this morning. I wish you had stepped in last night.”

“ I was not dressed for a party,” replied Mr. Mordaunt.

“ It is the first ‘ at home’ Lady Mary has given since her arrival in town. Most of my father’s political associates were there ; plenty of mammas with daughters on sale ; some beauty, and abundance of fashion. You have been so long out of the town world, you would

have been amused. By the bye!—there was one person there whom you would hardly guess.”

“ I have no clue to hazard a conjecture,” responded Mr. Mordaunt.

“ You recollect meeting, in the church-yard at Rochdale, a person of the name of Atkinson ?” rejoined Mr. Manvers. “ He is now a colonel in the army. My father, who gave him his first commission, is proud of his advancement. But there is something in the expression of his countenance which keeps up my original bad opinion of him. He is said to be a widower. He brought with him a young lady, still in her teens, whom he introduced to my Aunt as his daughter. She is, my dear fellow ! the most softly beautiful and feminine being I have ever seen ; and her beauty is heightened, to my eyes, by a trace of settled sadness in the expression of her lovely countenance, when not lighted up by conversation, which greatly interested me. She reminded me of my dear Louisa.”

Mordaunt became thoughtful.

“ There is, however,” continued Mr. Manvers, “ more intellect in her expression than I recollect in poor Louisa’s. She is rather below the middle stature : her hair is auburn,

with a profusion of natural curls, shadowing a smooth and capacious forehead. Her features are comely, but not symmetrically beautiful; but when she smiles,—oh! it is the smile of an angel! to such a susceptible heart as your's, Frederick, it would be dangerously fascinating."

"My dear Manvers," rejoined Mordaunt, "I have never before heard you expatiate so enthusiastically on female charms. Were you a bachelor, or a widower, I should imagine you fairly entangled. Does she converse fluently?"

"I had little opportunity of sounding the depth of her intellect or acquirements," responded Mr. Manvers; "but sufficient to convince me that she possesses a romantic and highly cultivated taste for natural scenery. She described to me the Trosachs in such rich, poetic language, yet so singularly free from bombast, that I could have listened for ever. Nevertheless, her romantic admiration is tinged with some melancholy recollections; for, as she concluded the description, she cast her eyes upon the floor, and seemed to try to stifle a sigh which escaped from her bosom."

"The Trosachs!" ejaculated Mordaunt; and he bit his lips, and appeared at once lost in reverie. "Can it be?" thought he, almost

speaking the ideas that were passing through his mind ; “ it is impossible ! a father has no occasion to run away with his child ;—and how could the daughter of Richard Atkinson be the niece of Colonel Standard ?—and her name Ashton ? ”—He put his hand to his forehead.

“ You are absent, Mordaunt,” said Mr. Manvers ; “ my account of this beauty has sent your fancy wandering. There, however, is that, with regard to her, which, much as her beauty and her manner interest, I wish to know more about. I suspect—I strongly suspect—that she is not Atkinson’s daughter. When she took leave, as she curtsied to Lady Mary, her smile, fascinating and lovely as it is, spoke not of a happy heart : her step and movement were elegant, but they seemed joyless ; she hung upon the arm of Atkinson, but not as a daughter, proud in the affection of a father.”

Mr. Mordaunt was evidently embarrassed : his friend Manvers fixed his gaze upon him, and then looked at me, as if demanding an explanation. I could give him none, although his remarks had shed a ray of light upon the mystery which had so long perplexed me.

“ My father is proud of Atkinson,” continued Mr. Manvers ; “ he has had little opportunity of perceiving the shades in his character

which have always made me avoid him ; he has merely traced his rise in his profession ; and now he regards him as a triumphant example of the value of patronage to youthful talent, in a rank of life where it would otherwise be worse than useless, as it might probably engender mischief, were it left unaided to struggle with the world."

" So generous a feeling," said I, " is honorable to the Earl."

Mr. Mordaunt still remained absorbed in thought. Mr. Manvers ascribed this to associations which his mention of his sister's funeral had awakened in the memory of his friend : he kindly took his hand, and endeavoured to change the train of his ideas by remarking—

" Why, Frederick ! my dear fellow ! you are in a reverie. Come, come ! you shall see this paragon. It is probable that Atkinson and his daughter may be again at my father's to-morrow, as Lady Mary means to have a small, select party. You will be charmed with the musical powers and the refined sentiment of this beauty. You will then be convinced that I have not appreciated them too highly,—that I do not paint from imagination,—that it is a portrait far beneath the grace and loveliness of

the original. By the bye, she sang some stanzas which I never before heard, except from yourself. I was pleased with them; and I wrote them down from your dictation. At the time, I believed them to be your own."

"Let me hear them," said Mr. Mordaunt, roused by the remark.

"Most certainly—if I can recollect them," replied his friend; "but do not pretend, my dear fellow, to claim the merit of their production."

Ah ! Ladye ! life ean only know
 But once its young and sunny hours,
 Its airy dancee on fairy ground,
 Bespangled o'er with rainbow flowers.

At first, Hope whispers only joy,
 And Love within the heart is born,
 While life's lights are the rosy hues
 That fringe the flecey clouds of morn.

Alas ! such fairy flowers must fade ;
 Hope dies upon the darken'd air,
 And the warm heart, which eradled Love,
 Is the lone home of eold Despair.

"Are you in earnest?" rejoined Mr. Mordaunt, eagerly. "Did Miss Atkinson really sing these words?"

“ She really did ; and not only sweetly, but with much feeling.”

Mr. Mordaunt again gazed inquisitively in his friend's face. The colour fled his countenance, and an involuntary shudder came over him.

“ What is the matter, my dear Frederick ?” enquired Mr. Manvers, as he noticed this sudden change.

Mordaunt essayed to speak ; but, for a few seconds, he could not. The verses were indeed his writing : he had never given a copy of them to any one but Caroline Ashton. The description of Miss Atkinson by his friend—the verses—the details which he had heard at Melrose—all conspired to confirm the heart-rending truth—for he believed it to be such—which had flashed upon his mind, that the so termed Miss Atkinson and Caroline Ashton were one and the same individual ; and that the means employed by Atkinson, whatever they were, had succeeded in making her the willing companion of that libertine. A cold, paralyzing hand seemed now placed upon the heart of the unhappy Clergyman ; whilst his bosom was bursting with the accumulated blood arrested in its current. A deep and convulsive sob or two came to his

relief: in a few minutes reaction supervened, a flush overspread the previous pallidness of his face, his languid eye glistened, and, rising from his seat, he grasped the hand of Mr. Manvers, and said, in a firm, collected tone of voice,—

“ My excellent friend, overlook and forgive my weakness; but conduct me directly to the house of Colonel Atkinson. The lady who has so much interested you is not his daughter; her name is Ashton; he has carried her off from her relations, and—” Here his lips were firmly compressed, and a momentary tremor again shook his whole frame. “ He has, I fear, triumphed over her—affection. I cannot, now, tell you all—which you shall know—respecting her, and my interest in her fate: but no moment must be lost; come,—lead me to the abode of that most abandoned of all unprincipled men, Colonel Atkinson.”

“ The event which my friend has just described,” said I, “ is indeed the cause of our visit to the metropolis.”

The surprise depicted on the countenance of Mr. Manvers may be conceived, but it cannot be described. He took up his hat, and, at the same time, informed his friend that Colonel

Atkinson's lodgings were unknown to him ; but if he would walk with him as far as Green Street, they might there obtain information respecting them. Mordaunt placed his arm within that of Mr. Manvers, and the friends instantly left the house.

They had scarcely departed, before my mind turned to investigate the following speculation : whether, in such a condition of corporeal collapse and reaction as I had just witnessed, caused either by deep grief, or some unhappy event, suddenly and unexpectedly occurring, the integrity of the mind often remains unaffected, whilst the principle of association, operating as in a dream, the boundaries of time and space are broken down, and the events of a life crowded within the lapse of a few moments ? Such, my worthy friend long afterwards informed me, was the effect of this development of the mystery which involved the fate of Caroline Ashton on his bewildered imagination. The future rose to his mental vision as one interminable, dreary, comfortless track of wretchedness : he felt the iron of Despair entering his soul ; and whilst, on one hand, the wily demon presented to him a picture of the misery of existence,—on the other, he

softly whispered the relief to be obtained from withdrawing from it.

“ Is not short payne well borne that brings long ease,
 And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave ?
 Sleep after toyle, port after stormy seas,
 Ease after war, death after life, doth greatly please*.”

For a moment, smarting under the anguish which had overpowered his mind, as well as his body, Mr. Mordaunt listened to the soothing voice of the persuader : he was ready to rush from the house and throw himself into the Thames, or to pass a bullet through his head : but, fortunately, his mental integrity brought on the reaction which ensued ; his strength of reason, his moral principles, his religious convictions, returned, and they prevailed. He was resolved to face the man who, as he assumed, had blasted his hopes of felicity ; and to hear from his own mouth, and from the lips of Miss Ashton herself, the acknowledgment that she had transferred her affections ; and, if such was the case, he resolved accordingly to frame his purpose. All idea that she was under restraint had vanished. The simple circumstance of her having sung at Lady Mary’s party was to him a sufficient demonstration that she was a free

* Spencer.

agent : yet, Manvers had spoken of the melancholy which hung over her. These were contradictions which could be explained only by a personal interview with her ; and that, at all hazards, Mr. Mordaunt was determined to obtain. Although appearances were against her : and although adversity had rendered him impatient under the wound which he believed had been inflicted by her hand, yet, he commanded enough of reason not to pass a judgment without decisive evidence. He had no malice to indulge ; he felt no desire that revenge should triumph ; he was suffering, bitterly, from circumstances over which he had no control—which he certainly had not merited : but of such is the world ! How often do we behold sudden misery involve the best part of the species ! Is there no recompense in reserve—no hope to which the dimmed eye may be raised—no beam of comfort to lighten the burthen of wretchedness which presses on the bosom of the undeserving sufferer ? Certainly not in this world.

After the departure of the two friends, —tired with my own reflections, and almost sickened with the gloomy view of mortality which spread before me,—I took up my hat and strolled out, with the expectation of find-

ing at least something to dissipate my thoughts. The streets were crowded ; but I walked on, unheeding the dense stream of population in which I mingled ; and I scarcely knew where my steps were proceeding. I could not, however, shake off the melancholy train of ideas which the conduct of Miss Ashton had awakened in my mind :—a dark cloud seemed to hang over humanity :—the struggles—the disappointments—the woes of life—the mockings of the present at the anticipations of the past—the wreck of the best and purest affections of the heart—ever presented themselves, and would not be shaken off. I had, unfortunately, cause to believe that that portion of our species, whose perfections approximate nearest to those of angelic spirits, are nevertheless not devoid of guile. I had felt the poignancy of the wound which the falsehood of woman leaves in the heart it has stricken—the barb transfixed in the wound to exasperate the pain. Time and the balm of patience, it was true, had done something to mitigate the excess of my sufferings : but now I seemed doomed to witness its withering influence on another—one, too, apparently born for enjoyment—whose dawn of existence had been gilded with the warm rays of prospective happiness.

When woman suffers from the inconstancy of our sex, all the sympathies of our nature are justly called forth for her consolation and support. Why then should a similar fate in man awaken only sentiments of pity, as if that passion, which in its purity redeems our fallen nature, were only weakness in him? Mr. Mor-daunt cherished the sentiment in its utmost purity. Why then, in his case, did I ask myself, has the blush of the rose, which should have tinted every coming event, yielded place to the sombre hue of the nightshade? and although framed for the exercise of the gentler sympathies,—although of unsullied conduct as a clergyman, with elevated sentiments of the religion which he professes,—warm in his affections as a friend,—constant in his attachments,—adapted in all respects to bring happiness into domestic life,—yet, why is he a miserable man? Heaven only knows.

CHAPTER IX.

“ O, Time, too swift ! O, swiftness, never ceasing !
 His youth ’gainst age, and age ’gainst time hath spurn’d,
 But spurn’d in vain ; youth waneth by increasing :
 Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers that fading been ;
 Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.”

ESSEX.

I HAD ascended the steps and walked into the church-yard—if it may be called by such a name—of St. Andrew’s, Holborn. What a difference between it and that which I had last visited ! In the one case, the repose of beautiful nature hung over the heaved turf, the narrow abodes of the dead : the silence of midnight, broken only by the distant murmur of the Tweed, like the stream of life, fretting over its channel ; the sacred ruins heightened in their solemn grandeur by the softened light of the moon ; all contributed to lead the mind into a train of reflections likely to mellow both the heart and the conduct : in the other—amidst the buzz of the restless crowd, in the busiest part of the most stirring city of the world, sur-

rounded by every thing artificial—no heaving turf spangled with dew,—not a single feature calculated to sympathize with the inner man—to excite contemplation either on passing life, or on the frail tenure of humanity.

A funeral was being performed at the time : the mock pomp of the nodding plumes, and the cold looks of the mantled mourners, ill accorded with the ceremony, which was hurried over in the most slovenly and indecorous manner ; whilst the bright sun of noon, vainly struggling to dispel the eternal mist which settles over the city, added to the feelings of disgust and dissatisfaction which had been raised. As I descended the stairs of the church-yard, these sentiments were not abated by observing multitudes, both men and women, entering into, and issuing from, a celebrated retail shop for spirituous liquors on the opposite side of the street. I stood for a few minutes to count their numbers ; during which I was most forcibly struck with the impress which the long-continued vice of dram-drinking had fixed on the countenances of many of them, recording, too distinctly, the tale both of their moral degradation and their broken-down constitutions. My fancy insensibly drew a vivid picture of the numerous and frightful procession of diseases issuing from that temple of inebri-

ation : Crime marching in its van, followed by Death, and the dark cloud of retribution hanging heavily upon its rear.

As I was meditating on this creation of the imagination, wondering at the multiplied forms under which misery, of man's own seeking, visits mortals in this world, I felt my arm gently grasped. I turned round ; the individual who stood before me was a thin, pale, upright, soldier-looking person ; his face, which bore traces of former comeliness, was a little disfigured by a sabre wound across the left cheek ; and a cloth arm, suspended from a stump on the left side, was looped to a button of the coat. Still the face of the individual, his voice, and his military air, were familiar to me ; there was something about him, however, which I could not recognize : the resemblance was only a faint outline of one who was no more. He grasped my hand warmly, and, staring me in the face, exclaimed, " is it possible, Doctor, that you have forgotten me ? am I indeed so altered ? " I gazed steadfastly on his countenance ; he returned my fixed look with as penetrating a gaze : at length his features relaxed to a smile, that fascinating smile which could not be imitated, and which instantly brought the conviction of truth to my supposition. " It must be,"

I half muttered, "Camer—" "Cameron, in truth!" said he, taking up the word; "your old friend, arisen from the dead; and, after having despaired of ever seeing you again, to have so unexpectedly met you!" It was indeed the fragment of the manly figure of my friend that stood before me—altered in every respect but in his heart, where the same warmth of affection, the same genuine friendship, still glowed with all their original ardour. Had we not been in the street, I would have folded him to my bosom.

"Come, Doctor," said he, linking his arm in mine, "this is not the place for our gossip: let us adjourn to my lodgings. I am obliged, unfortunately, to leave town to-morrow morning; and we have more to tell one another than time will permit."

We had no sooner entered my excellent friend's apartments, and shut the door, than he threw his only arm around my neck, and, resting his forehead on my shoulder, gave vent to a burst of grief, which recollections, conjured up by our meeting, had revived. My heart also was full, and we stood for a few minutes silent, locked in each other's embrace.

"Excuse my weakness, Mac Alpine," said he, recovering himself "Sit down, my ex-

cellent friend, and you shall know every thing which has happened to me since we parted."

We accordingly seated ourselves, and Cameron delivered the following narrative of his adventures.

" I need not recall to your memory, my dear friend, the circumstances attending the farewell of our long separation. The charge which the French curassiers made upon our Highlanders was nobly sustained ; but I saw little of it ; for we had scarcely mingled with the horsemen when I received the sabre wound across my face which has so disfigured me. I fell to the ground ; and, in defending my head from a second blow aimed at it, my arm was fractured in such a manner as afterwards rendered amputation indispensable. Owing to the loss of blood, I soon fainted. I can only recollect the noise of the cannon, and the shouts of the charges, dying away as in a dream. How long I remained in this condition I know not ; but when sensibility returned, I found myself lying beneath the bodies of two of my own men, and surrounded by others of my brave fellows who had fallen in opposing the charge. The pain which I suffered was great, and I groaned in agony.

" Night came on, and the light of the

pioneers' flambeaux flared over the field, and I was comforted with the hope of being soon carried off with the rest of the wounded, when one of the Jew harpies, the followers of the camp, came up, and instantly proceeded to cut off my epaulets. I implored him to inform the pioneers that I was there, alive, but severely wounded. He made no reply to my request; but threatened my life, if I spoke a word until he was gone. Thank Heaven! a Spanish gentleman, who resided in the neighbourhood of the field of battle, and whose curiosity had led him to traverse it after the engagement, passed at the moment: he gazed on me and on the plunderer for a few seconds; then, with an honorable feeling, darted upon the Jew and wrested the knife from his hand. The miscreant seized a sword which lay upon the ground, and made a plunge at my deliverer, who dexterously warded the blow, and closed with the Jew. As he was a powerful young man, the struggle was short: in a few minutes he gained possession of the sword and run it through the body of the scoundrel.

“ My deliverer knelt down beside me, and, in the most tender manner, enquired respecting my wounds and my feelings. He proposed to go and procure a conveyance to take me to the hospital; but I beseeched him not to leave me.

and to watch by me until the waggons, which were collecting the wounded, should come up. He did as I directed, and sat down close to me for half an hour ; when, a number of the camp followers and Jews approaching, he became alarmed, lest, on perceiving the dead body of their comrade, they should wreak their vengeance on him and me. He proposed to carry me altogether off the field, and then to take measures to procure my conveyance to the hospital. I had no sooner assented to his proposition than it was carried into effect. He rolled my plaid and his own cloak around me, and, lifting me in his arms, conveyed me out of the range of the plunderers, to the bank of a rivulet.

“ Although the pain of my wounds, which the night air had irritated, was great, yet my weakness was so considerable that I fainted ; and when I again became sensible, the morning had dawned, and I found myself lying under a tree, with my kind deliverer chafing my hands and temples.

“ Holy Jesu be thanked !” he exclaimed, on seeing me open my eyes ; and he continued, assiduously, his kind offices. The cold of the night had completely stanchd the bleeding of my wounds ; but I felt stiff and pained in

every joint. I gazed on my deliverer:—every thing which had passed since I was struck down appeared to me as a dream: the peaceful repose which reigned around me; the gentle murmur of the stream; the early notes of the redbreast; the cawing of the crows wending afield; and the soft breeze of the morning; would have almost led to the belief that the battle, and all that occurred after it, was a fiction of the imagination, had not the anguish of my wounds and the presence of my deliverer demonstrated their reality.

“The Spanish gentleman, for such he was, to whom I owed my safety, was apparently about thirty years of age, tall and manly in his form; his features were expressive of benevolence, although large and marked; his complexion was a chesnut brown, and his hair black and clustering on his shoulders, as worn by the majority of his countrymen. He was evidently not a military man: he wore the dress of a Hidalgo—a green suit, closely fitted to his body, laced, with a black velvet cap, and untanned leather boots, wide at the top, and richly ornamented. You may readily suppose that I was not in a condition to note these particulars at the time; but such was his daily dress, and that which he then wore. I can never forget

his kind look, when I attempted to thank him for what he had done for me ; and on my requesting him to repair to the British head quarters and reporting my condition, that I might be sent for and conveyed to the hospital.

“ ‘ How can I leave you ? ’ said he, ‘ to the chance of being discovered and plundered, or even murdered, by those miscreants from whom I rescued you last night ? Every thing is now quiet, and the English army has evidently moved onward ; but, still, some of the camp followers may remain behind ; and although you are some distance from the field of battle, yet they may wander this way.’

“ I endeavoured to persuade him that this was not very likely ; that the Jews would confine themselves to the field of battle, to pick up any thing which they had overlooked last night : and I therefore beseeched him to seek head quarters, and to obtain for me the assistance I required. He left me with reluctance.

“ He had scarcely departed, ere my thoughts turned to Perthshire. Although I could not move, and I was smarting severely under the pains of my wounds, yet, as my upcast eyes gazed upon the clear blue sky, across which the fleecy clouds of morning slowly floated, I

fancied it reflected from the mirror bosom of my own paternal lake. The trill of the robin, on the branch of the tree under which I lay,—the note of the linnet, flitting from shrub to shrub,—and the tiny horn of the bee, on his earliest excursion,—all conspired to support the delusion that I was at home; whilst the soothing, monotonous gurgle of the stream gradually lulled me to sleep; and I dreamt of my mother. Alas! I never saw her again!”

My excellent friend paused for a moment, to controul his feelings; and then proceeded.

“I was awakened from this happy slumber by the return of my unknown friend. He informed me that the army had advanced, and carried its wounded with it: but that he had brought a carriage to remove me to his own house in the neighbourhood. ‘There,’ said he, laying his hand upon my shoulder, ‘my sister and I shall be your nurses, and I will seek out the most skilful surgeon in the district to attend to your wounds; and—Jesu, Marie—you shall again join your countrymen, sound and well.’ I shook my head; but, whilst I thus indicated my doubt, and my opinion of my danger, my mind clung to hope; an instinctive feeling that I should recover seemed born at that moment; and what we desire, we believe.

The kindly manner in which the Samaritan intentions of this stranger were announced, quite overcame me—I wept like a boy.

“ I suffered much from the removal, and was scarcely laid in the comfortable bed to which I was conveyed, ere fever came on, accompanied with delirium, which rendered me insensible to every thing passing round me. I lay for ten days in this condition.

“ I awoke, at length, to a consciousness of my situation, and was surprised to find myself in bed, in a comfortable apartment, and a lady sitting at a small table, embroidering. My astonishment was extreme, as I could not recollect how I had got there. The battle, and the fact of my being wounded, were fresh in my memory; but my ideas respecting all that had subsequently happened were confused and unsatisfactory. My attendant, who did not perceive that I was awake, and that I had raised myself upon my arm, was a woman between twenty and thirty years of age, tall and graceful, with a fine Spanish contour of countenance, and jet black hair, braided upon her forehead, and rolled upon the back of the head, in that Grecian fashion which is so becoming in the Castilian ladies. Her dress, which was of rich black velvet, indicated her condition to be above

the middle rank of life ; and, through the sedateness and repose of her features, as she sat intent upon her embroidery, there was an expression of benevolence and sweetness calculated to interest.

“ ‘ Senora,’ said I, addressing her in Spanish, ‘ will you inform me where I am ?’

“ She started on hearing my voice, and instantly rose : and, having regarded me for a few seconds, she replied :—‘ Senor, you are in the house of my brother, Don Pedro de Saldanho. He has left you for a short time, to snatch a little sleep, and has requested me to watch by you. I will call him, Senor—’ and she immediately left the room. In a few minutes, however, she returned. ‘ He is gone out,’ she said, in a voice which was music to my ear—for it was that of female sympathy ; and who, in distress of mind or of body, has not owned its witchery ? ‘ Can I do any thing for you, Senor ?’ continued she, advancing towards the bed, and casting upon me the most benignant smile : ‘ my brother will be so rejoiced that you are better.’

“ I stretched out my emaciated arm : she knelt down beside the bed, and, having crossed herself, took my hand between both of hers.—

“ ‘ It is much less feverish,’ she half whis-

pered—‘ much cooler, than it has been ; yet I fear you are in pain somewhere, Senor—you groaned so piteously as you slept.’

“ ‘ I am sorry to trouble you,’ replied I ; ‘ but my mind is confused ; I know not how I came here : tell me, lady, how it is.’

“ ‘ Do not think of it at present,’ responded she ; ‘ you shall know all by and bye. How can I relieve your sufferings ?’

“ I gazed in her face, and tried to smile.

“ ‘ Your kind sympathy,’ said I, ‘ has already assuaged my pain. It is in my arm that I have the most anguish ; may I venture to request you to rub it ? I am sorry to impose upon your kindness.’

“ ‘ Mention it not, Senor,’ said she ; and she passed her delicate hand gently along my arm.

“ ‘ Nay,’ I hastily remarked, ‘ it is my other arm which suffers.’

“ She gazed intently in my face, with a look which seemed to enquire—‘ are you in earnest ?’ At length she replied—‘ Alas ! Senor, you have no other arm. Mortification appeared in your wounded arm soon after you were brought here ; it extended, and, two days since, the surgeons amputated it.’

“ As she spoke, my eyes fell upon the

stump. I had not previously been conscious of my loss ; and the pains which I experienced in that arm left me no reason to doubt its presence. At some other time, Doctor, you must explain to me the cause of this singular phenomenon.

“ In the mean while the Senora had risen. As I looked up in her face, I was struck with its loveliness ; her eyes were large, black, soft, and languishing ; the rich colour of health blushed sweetly upon her cheek ; and her mouth displayed that graceful curve ever ready to assume the smile, which, as it fascinates the beholder, expresses at the same time a consciousness of its own bewitching power. I forgot my pains as I gazed upon her :—it was one of those countenances which at once impress attention, and appeal to the heart. I was in the act of uttering my gratitude for her kindness, when her brother entered the apartment. A look of surprise and delight spread over his fine and noble features on observing the improved change in my condition.

“ ‘ By what magic, dear Rosalba !’ said he, has this improvement in our patient been effected ? Senor, I am delighted to perceive such an indication of recovery : but let me entreat you not to exert yourself in the smallest degree ; compose yourself to sleep ; your ex-

hausted strength truly requires it.' I was about to reply ; but he placed his finger on his lips to enforce silence ; and, after giving me a little liquid to moisten my parched tongue, and gently drawing the curtains, so as to screen the light from my eyes, he sat down by my bed, silent ; and Rosalba withdrew.

" I will not, my dear friend," continued Colonel Cameron, " weary you with details. Day after day, Don Pedro and his lovely sister watched by my couch, anticipating all my wants and ministering to my comfort. Must I confess that, deeply as I felt the debt of gratitude which I owed to my generous preserver, I often longed for the termination of the periods of his attendance, that I might enjoy that of his sister. There is—as you must well know, Doctor—in feminine kindness a healing balm which we do not find in the utmost attention and affectionate nursing of our own sex. It has been wrongly said that disease blunts the feelings, and that the heart of the sick man becomes as cold as the grave which is yawning to receive him. On the contrary, I maintain that the feelings become more sensitive ; a smile, a look, a word, vibrates upon the chords of our affection. But it is from woman that these kindnesses are experienced : the delicacy with

which every little office is performed, — the smoothing of the pillow, — the tenderness with which the head is raised, whilst the gentle hand presents the refreshing draught to cool the feverish lip, — the soft music of the voice which enquires into the wants of the sufferer, — the felicitous interpretation of his wishes, — the consoling smile which meets each expression of deep-felt gratitude, beamed even when the eyes are suffused with tears, and the bosom is labouring with the apprehension of impending danger, — are peculiarly the attributes of woman. It is not, therefore, wonderful, that, like the touch of the alchymist, the sympathy which thus awakens should occasionally transmute our gratitude into love. I felt its power: the daily, unremitted attentions of Donna Rosalba found a resting place in my bosom. I was unhappy in her absence; whilst her presence was ever to me as that of a guardian angel, filling my heart with hope, and alluring me from myself by giving an interest and an importance to the most trilling incidents which occurred.

“ Many weeks passed before I was able to leave my bed; and a few more ere I could quit my apartment. It was then that I became fully aware of the truth, that the happiness of my existence was closely interwoven with that

of my lovely hostess. The fatigue which she had undergone, and her long confinement to my sick room, had impaired her health; and for two days I was deprived of her society. Although nothing could exceed the kindness of Don Pedro—a kindness which could only be equalled by that of a fond parent, or an affectionate brother,—yet I felt desolate. I feared that his sister was worse than he stated: my imagination conjured up a thousand evils: I saw her suffering, and could not assist her: my mind reverted to the hours which she had sat by my side—to every incident that had occurred; happiness seemed to have departed from me, never to return; the sunshine which had cheered my anguish had given place to the clouds of gloomy anticipations and hopeless despondency.

“ It may appear singular that I had never asked myself the question, is it probable that a reciprocal sentiment can be awakened in the breast of one so lovely, for one so mutilated as I now knew myself to be? A fascinating instinct whispered to me that I was not indifferent to that bosom in which all my affections now centered; and I never doubted the probability of the suggestion.

“ The third day came, and Rosalba again

entered my apartment. Don Pedro had, a few minutes before, supported me to the window, and had left the room.

“ ‘This was the first time I had looked upon the face of Nature since my confinement. The house of Don Pedro stood on a gently rising ground, in an amphitheatre of undulating hills, mantled with rich woods ; in one direction lay the vale of the late foughten field, the scene of my overthrow, and of the triumph of my country’s arms. The landscape rose before me like a fresh creation ; the sky was without a cloud ; the grass yet sparkled with dewy diamonds ; the limberest branch—every leaf, was motionless ; the breezes slept : it was a scene of calm pastoral repose, calculated for tender reminiscences and peaceful associations. To the reflective mind, the tranquillity which reigned presented, indeed, a most forcible contrast to the noise, the turmoil, the rage, which so lately deluged with blood the distant vale, upon which I now gazed.

“ ‘ You are admiring our rural landscape, Senor,’ Rosalba remarked, as she approached, unperceived, to the spot where I stood.

“ ‘The sound of her voice startled me :—I attempted to turn round, but my enfeebled knees sunk beneath me, and I almost fell to

the ground. She upheld me in her arms, and led me tottering to my chair. In thanking her, I could not avoid expressing, warmly, how much I had suffered from her absence. She blushed deeply; and we both sat silent for some minutes.

“ ‘ Your voice, Rosalba,—pardon me for addressing you familiarly,—Senora Saldanho, your voice,’ I repeated, ‘ reminds me of one who is dearer to me than life.’ ”

“ She coloured as I uttered the words, and then became pale as ashes. I can scarcely describe the idea which instantly shot across my mind, and led me, as it were, to explain my expression.

“ ‘ It was of my mother,’ I resumed, ‘ that I was speaking; one whose feelings are congenial with your own. Would to Heaven she could know how deeply I am indebted to your generous sympathy! How erroneous is the opinion that we learn nothing, in our progress through life, but the knowledge of evil! At almost every step I have found something to love: even the sufferings of war have brought me acquainted with you and with Don Pedro.’ ”

“ ‘ You owe us nothing,’ replied she, looking down as she spoke; ‘ we have only done our duty as Christians. Tell me,’ she con-

tinued, changing the conversation, ‘ something of your country, and your mother. I long to hear of one who so completely engrossed your thoughts, during the delirium of your fever.’

“ I described to her Perthshire, and my beloved parent.”—

Here the voice of my friend faltered, and he paused.

“ Alas! Doctor, I have since that time seen my poor mother only in my dreams. The report of my death, which had reached her, brought her to the grave. Well!—I submit—it was the will of Providence.

“ To proceed:—My recovery being now almost certain, Don Pedro set off to the English head quarters, to report that I was alive. Books, the conversation and the guitar of Rosalba, with the sweet accompaniment of her voice, gave wings to the hours; my strength increased apace; and, before the return of Don Pedro, I was able to walk out, and to ride for a short time.

It was after one of these excursions in the neighbourhood;—the evening had set in, and the new moon was just beginning to shew her pale, slender crescent, like a broken ring, in the sky; the air was balmy, and the soft breeze bore upon its breath the fragrant odour of the

rose. I was standing, with Rosalba, at a window which looked over the vale, describing the beauties of my native glens,—the craggy faces of the rocks, mantled with the oak, the mountain ash, and the delicate birch,—the pure crystal of the streams,—the roaring torrents,—the dashing cataracts,—and the spreading lake, reflecting from its mirror the frowning mountains which embosom it in deep and awful solitude. If my enthusiasm heightened the picture, my imagination was still more excited by the breathless attention of my lovely auditor.

“ ‘Are the Scottish maidens,’ said she, looking down as she made the enquiry, ‘as beautiful as their land is romantic?’

“ ‘They are fair and faithful,’—was my reply.

“ She sighed, and remained silent.

“ ‘They have not,’ continued I, ‘the warm temperaments and glowing imaginations of your countrywomen: their love is pure, like the welling spring which issues from their native rocks:—it is not ardent like that of the Castilian, whose love is the lava stream, that almost consumes the bosom which it warms.’

“ She smiled at the simile, and a blush overspread her face and neck.

“ ‘Tell me,’ said she, hesitating,—‘are all your countrymen as romantic as you are?’

“ ‘ All mountaineers are romantic,” replied I ;—“ even the natives of your own Sierras have the same high and lofty sentiments which characterize the inhabitants of all mountainous countries.’

“ ‘ But theirs is not the tender poetry of romance which you possess. I have listened until I long to visit those glens which you have so eloquently described. Alas ! there is no chance of that wish ever being realized. But I shall dream of them when you are gone ; and I shall speak of them too.’

“ She was silent for a minute, and then continued—

“ ‘ Your heart is in your glens, Senor : you will return home and forget Spain. Cold as your maidens are, there is perhaps one—’

“ She paused ere the sentence was finished, and again blushed deeply. I almost instinctively essayed to take her hand : with the simplicity of a child, she placed it in mine.

“ Must I, my dear friend !” said Cameron, “ continue the details of what followed ? Must I attempt to embody in language what can only be felt ?—Need I say that from that moment my felicity was permanently sealed ?—That my heart, which had previously pulsated merely with filial affection, which cradled only the image of my beloved mother, now expanded

to enshrine an idol,—on whose altar was deposited the bond of my future destiny. I need not say to you, Doctor, who have looked so deeply into the source of human feelings, how much the sentiment to which I have yielded has brightened every prospect in life; and with what longing I look forward to that moment which shall unite me with Rosalba, in the endearing bands of mutual affection and indissoluble wedlock.”

I could not avoid smiling inwardly at my friend’s romantic enthusiasm. His love was hallowed; it was the *φλότης* of Homer, all sweetness, felicity, prudence, and wisdom. It would have been cruel to cool his ardour—diabolical to mock his faith: but, I could have told him how painfully I had learnt the truth, that fidelity is a dream, and reliance on the love of woman but baring the bosom to the steel of disappointment. A woman should be “pure as the eye of heaven*.” But, alas! how often, even in the married state, do flattery, wealth, title, the desire of conquest, personal vanity, conspire to undermine, and even succeed in storming the citadel of female constancy.

The mind of a woman should be filled with the love of her husband, her aspirations for

* Jeremy Taylor.

a return of his affection should be ardent,—her bosom sacred as a temple, into whose secret no stranger has a right to enter; yet, how often is the soothing unction laid to the soul, that Platonism is not vice! Dare I continue the picture?—the matrimonial bonds are gradually loosened; jealousy, doubt, mistrust, often hatred, are engendered; and the remainder of life is a scene of struggle and wretchedness.

“ ‘They that enter into the marriage state,’” says one of the soundest divines* that ever graced the English Episcopal Bench, “cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity.” But perhaps I have gone too far. I have no right to draw a general conclusion from my own particular case. The anticipations of my friend in the affection of Rosalba were unlimited; it is but justice to say that he was not disappointed†.

Colonel Cameron continued his narrative.

“ Don Pedro returned from the camp, and brought to me Sir Arthur Wellesley’s approba-

* Jeremy Taylor.

† The phillipics which the worthy Doctor has scattered through his *Diary* against the fair sex are to be referred to his early disappointment; the history of which, however, must be told on another occasion.—EDITOR.

tion of my conduct, with a permission to return home, until my health was fully established.

“ Week after week passed on : my strength became so much improved that I thought of joining without taking advantage of the indulgence to return to England : but, although day after day was fixed for my departure, yet still, Rosalba found some reasons for delaying it, and I fondly yielded to her arguments. Her happiness was to me the first object in life : and well it might be ; for, as she was untainted by that desire for admiration and conquest which society engenders in the female breast, she wished and sought for nothing but love ; and she enjoyed it, in all its genuine purity, from the object who had awakened the sentiment in her bosom. Undeserving as I knew myself to be, I knew that I was beloved ; and Rosalba was to me the sun of my existence. But the moment was near which was to separate us for a time ; and, at length, it came.

“ You may readily imagine the melancholy which the separation so near at hand impressed upon the family group. Rosalba and I had much to say to one another ; yet, she seemed particularly to avoid the opportunities which presented themselves during the day : there was about her manner an embarrassment which was unusual, and which perplexed and distressed me.

“ As the day closed in, she proposed a walk to a noble terrace, which her brother had formed on one of the neighbouring hills, commanding an extensive view over the vale, and which had been our favourite resort. The evening was one of those so frequent, towards the close of summer, in Spain. The sidelong rays of the descending sun had fringed, with the richest gold, a light curtain of purple clouds which hung over the western horizon ; a balmy breeze, freighted with the rich perfume of the orange blossom gently fanned the meadows, and rippled the surface of a little lake, along the margin of which our path lay. A group of villagers were dancing under the shade of a wide-spreading chesnut-tree. We stopped for a moment to look at them. Among the group was a young couple who had been only a few days united.

“ ‘ How handsome Margarita looks !’ I remarked to Rosalba, who hung on my arm ; ‘ and what fond glances pass between her and Jachiamo, as his eye follows her graceful movements in the dance ! There is a felicity in the attachment of that humble couple which makes poverty almost enviable.’

“ Rosalba sighed :—she said nothing, but she gently drew me from the scene.

“ We sat down on a seat, on the terrace, which Don Pedro had ordered to be made

for me in the early days of my recovery. For a few minutes both of us were silent:—at length, Rosalba—her eyes fixed upon the ground—took my hand—

“ ‘ My dearest friend,’ said she, ‘ I have a communication to make to you, which involves the happiness of both of us ; but I cannot summon courage for the task.’ ”

“ She lifted her eyes to my face: they were swimming in tears, and her bosom heaved with the most violent agitation.

“ ‘ My Rosalba ! my beloved Rosalba !’ replied I, folding her to my breast—‘ what have you to say which cannot be confided to me ? what is it, my beloved ?’ ”

“ She buried her face on my shoulder, and sobbed aloud.

“ ‘ O ! could I be spared this trial !’ she exclaimed ;—‘ could I be spared !—but it cannot be.’ ”

“ Imagining that her distress referred to our separation, I endeavoured to sooth her, by mentioning how soon a few months would pass away ;—in protesting the ardency of my love, and its unalterable character. She again raised her head, and gazed in my face for a few seconds.

“ ‘ It is not the thought of our separation, painful as that is—no—it is not that,—dearest

Cameron! which now labours in my bosom—no, no—it is—but—’

“ Here nature and affection overcame the modest reserve which she had always maintained, even in our most confidential moments; and, flinging her arms, passionately, around my neck, she exclaimed—

“ ‘ I know, my dearest Cameron!—I prize—I confide in your constancy—I judge you by my own heart—you are to me every thing, and must ever remain so : but—when you return—’

“ Her bosom seemed torn by the deepest suffering; she struggled with it; and, after a convulsive sigh, continued—

“ ‘ When you return—when I again see you—the first, the only being that my heart has devotedly loved,—when you expect this hand to seal the bond of our mutual affection—how—O ! holy Virgin, support me !—how can I pronounce the sentence ?—it cannot be yours !’

“ ‘ Rosalba !’ I exclaimed, starting up, as she disengaged her arms from my neck—‘ what do I hear ?—recall these words.’

“ The words which she had spoken seemed to have again restored her self-possession. She took my hand, bathed it with her tears, and then, with a firmness of voice which astonished me, entreated me to be seated, and to listen to her.

“ ‘ It is proper, my beloved friend !’ said she, ‘ that you should know something of our family ; but its history involves a subject which is distressing almost to think of ; the details of which are of a nature which has made me shrink from them ; and, even now, were it possible, I would gladly avoid laying them before you. But, alas ! my dearest Cameron ! told they must be ; for, although my affections can never change, although my love can only terminate with my life, yet I fear the events which I have to narrate to you will place an insurmountable bar to that union which is the ultimate bond of congenial affection.’

“ As she spoke, I felt my blood run cold in my veins ; my imagination could not conjure up any idea of what her mysterious language implied ; I sat like a statue, scarcely conscious of existence. She quickly observed the effect which the few sentences she had already uttered had produced ; and, laying her hand upon mine, with a look the most cheering, sweet, and affectionate, she proceeded :—

“ ‘ Believe me, my dearest Cameron ! that these fatal words, which have evidently overpowered your feelings, refer to nothing dishonorable either in reference to myself or to my dear brother. But a deep and indelible injury has been

inflicted on our family honor—by one of your countrymen. We live in an unfeeling and a harsh world ; and, until this stain is removed, I cannot become a wife—not even to you, in whose bosom my heart reposes, and who are indeed to me more than life.’

“ Conceive, my dear friend, the load which this acknowledgment removed from my breast. I again breathed free ; and I felt only the most ardent desire to hear the nature of the injury, and to ascertain the possibility of my being able to remove the evil.

“ ‘ Tell me, my beloved Rosalba!’ said I, ‘ without the smallest disguise, the extent of the injury, and tell me the name of the individual who has inflicted it.’

“ ‘ You shall know the whole,’ responded she, ‘ except the name of the person. It is your discovery of that which I have feared, and which has forced me to remain silent on the subject, until it would be criminal to preserve silence longer. But, Cameron ! I cannot—I must not—I dare not mention the name of that man who has rendered my family wretched.’

“ It was in vain to urge the matter ; I therefore permitted her to proceed.

“ ‘ My father, Don Pedro de Saldanha, was a man of considerable wealth, accumulated from

successful mercantile speculations at Cadiz : my mother was of a noble family, whose proud bearing would not permit her to marry a plebeian, in which light my father was regarded. His affection soon settled the objection : he retired from business, and purchased the ample domain which my brother now possesses ; and, having obtained his wife, he lived partly here and partly at Madrid, where his great wealth introduced him to the society of the noblest families in Spain. His health, however, was infirm ; and, soon after my birth, he died ; leaving my mother with one son (my amiable brother), and two daughters. My mother still continued the custom of residing for a part of the year in Madrid ; and as her own family now countenanced her more than during the lifetime of my father, as soon as my sister arrived at the age of womanhood, she was introduced into the society and all the gaieties of that dissipated capital. I was but a girl, and my brother was still at Toledo, pursuing his philosophical studies, when the troubles of Spain commenced, and the French intrigues and arms placed the brother of Napoleon upon the Spanish throne. My mother retired to Badajoz, to the house of one of my maternal aunts. We were in the place when it sur-

rendered to the French ; and, as we were 'not afterwards allowed to leave it, we were also in it when it was recaptured by the British and the Portuguese troops.'

“ ‘ I was present at the siege,’ said I.

“ ‘ There is a gentlemanly bearing,’ continued Rosalba, ‘ a manly sincerity, a reserved gallantry, in British officers, which ensure confidence in the propriety of their conduct, and which have always gained for them a ready admittance into the domestic circles of my country. Among those officers who found a welcome in the house of my aunt, was one of high military reputation ; a man who, although on the verge of fifty, yet was singularly handsome in his person, very highly accomplished, and extremely fascinating in his manners. He spoke Spanish with the purity of a Castilian : he drew exquisitely—had a rich vein of poetry—was passionately fond of music—and possessed a voice which gave richness and interest to any instrument which he touched ; and they were few, indeed, which were not familiar to his hand. He was fascinated with the beauty of my sister, who was as accomplished, in some respects, as himself ; and, ere long, a reciprocal attachment existed between them.

“ ‘ Had you seen my unfortunate sister, my beloved friend, you would never have turned

an eye upon me. She was tall, beautiful, of the most perfect symmetry in form, and graceful in every movement. Although her deportment was dignified and grave, yet it was devoid of the smallest trace of pride:—there was a sweetness and fascination in her countenance which could not be looked upon without, at once, kindling sentiments of affection and love.

“ ‘ My mother observed, with some degree of anxiety, the growing attachment between Rosina and your countryman ; and she was determined, in order to break it off, to try to send her away. Something intervened to delay the execution of her intention : the British officer soon afterwards was ordered from Badajoz, to join the army ; and—oh ! Cameron ! how can I speak the words ?—my sister was missing.

“ ‘ When the first burst of astonishment and indignation was over, my poor mother endeavoured to console herself with the idea that a private marriage had been effected. Conceive her horror, and the depth of her degradation, on learning that that was not the case : that your countryman was a married man. It was true that he had separated from his wife ; but that did not alter the atrocity of the case : the stain inflicted upon the honor of the family could not be wiped out. My brother was too

young to be called upon to resent it ; besides, he was an only son ; and much of my poor parent's anxiety was to conceal from him the event. She pined inwardly, and soon sank a victim to sorrow.

“ ‘ On the recall of my brother, after my mother's death, the noble-minded boy swore to avenge the dishonor of his family, even in the centre of the British army ; and he left Badajoz for that purpose. His heroic intentions were frustrated ; the officer had been sent home, wounded, with dispatches ; and my unfortunate sister had fallen the victim of a fever, brought on by mental suffering, and an unavailing sense of degradation.’

“ ‘ Alas !’ said I, ‘ it is too common a case.’

“ ‘ Peace be to her spirit ! Holy Virgin !— I pray for its repose ! We believe that the chancery of heaven is not filled with criminal accusations and expiatory records, but with beneficent acts of forgiveness. He, who intercedes for us, knows the infirmities of our nature ; and, as we rely on his love, we also believe that the throne, at whose footstool the intercession is pleaded, is radiant with the beams of mercy ; and that these are the lights of heaven.

“ ‘ Since that time,’ continued Rosalba, has Dishonor, like a spectral form, ever ap-

peared at my side. Nevertheless, singular as it may appear, I loved my sister passionately ; and, whilst I felt deeply the disgrace which her conduct had brought upon the family, I grieved to think that Providence had not permitted me to see her, to have convinced her that even crime cannot chill real affection ; and, in her dying moments, to have awakened her soul to repentance, and to rely for intercession, for forgiveness, on that bosom, which is a fountain of mercy, the bosom of the Holy Virgin. Alas ! her last look rested upon a stranger, although the partner of her guilt. But she is gone for ever ! and a sense of the degradation which still hangs over her family has driven me to an act which must render me for ever wretched.’

“ Rosalba here gave vent to a burst of grief. I endeavoured to comfort her, and urged her to explain to me the cause of her wretchedness : but, for some time, she answered me only with tears ; and seemed labouring with her internal suffering : at length she said—

“ ‘ In a moment of misery, when pouring out my afflictions at the altar of the Holy Virgin, I bound myself by a solemn oath never to give my hand in marriage to any one, however my heart might be engaged, who would not wipe out the injury inflicted upon the family honor

by the blood of the spoiler. Oh! my beloved friend! I would give the world to be able to recall that hasty and inconsiderate vow; but it is registered in heaven—it cannot be withdrawn. I trust Providence will forgive the feelings which rung it from me: but I loathed life—every moment was one of misery. I thought it was impossible to forgive.’

“ She covered her face with her hands, and again wept bitterly—sobbing as if her heart would burst.

“ ‘ Be comforted, my dearest Rosalba!’ said I, relieved from a load of doubt and suspense; ‘ inform me who the villain is, and I swear never to see you again until your vow shall be resolved.’

“ ‘ Spare me—O, spare me!’ replied she, passionately, ‘ from complying with your request. I know your bold and determined spirit. Can I expose you, whose life to me is far more precious than my own, to the hazard of a personal conflict, even with the author of our misery? No, my dearest Cameron! we must part; but our hearts will remain united. You must leave me to the fruit of my folly. I shall never change. My maiden heart shall never admit any other impression; and I shall sink into the grave, grateful to Providence for

the short period of unalloyed felicity which I have tasted since we met.'

" I was overpowered by the generosity of these feelings ; and for a few minutes we both remained silent. I knew it would be vain to endeavour to obtain from Rosalba the name of the scoundrel who had given such a fatal blow to her peace of mind ; and as, in my own thoughts, I determined to procure, if possible, the information which I wanted from her brother, I did not urge my former request ; but assured her of the sincerity and unalterable character of my devoted attachment, and of the reliance which she might place upon its fidelity.

" The moon had by this time risen, and its placid light fell upon the face of Rosalba:—it was pale, and full of anxious thought. As her eyes met mine, a slight blush spread upon the cheek ; but it instantly disappeared, and her downcast eye was again fixed upon the ground.

" ' I know,' said she, ' you will not betray the confidence I have reposed in you : my only happiness in life shall be in knowing that I am beloved. I know well the extent of the felicity which I am throwing from me. I witnessed in my own parents the happiness of a congenial union—the reciprocal sympathy which sweetened every event of life—which soothed the sor-

rowful, and rendered the pleasurable brighter :— thoughts the most confidential communicated, and that confidence appreciated :—the love of each for the other the soul of their existence ; and each regarding the other as comprehending the whole relationship of life. I sigh for such felicity ; but it is not to be my lot : my hand cannot be yours whilst my vow hangs over me. I never will place you in a situation to resolve it—no—never ! Let us return.’

“ I endeavoured once more to gain the name of the destroyer of her peace of mind. I beseeched her to soften her sentence—to give me at least hope.

“ ‘ Listen once more, my truly beloved,’ she replied ; ‘ my heart is wholly, unalterably yours ; but I shall never divulge a name, the knowledge of which might prove fatal to you. Do not solicit me again.’

“ This sentence was uttered in a calm voice ; and, placing her arm in mine, we walked in silence to the house. How I then longed to realize the dreams of astrology, that I might read the future in the stars which now shone out so brilliantly : but they were a sealed book to me.

“ It is unnecessary, my dear friend,” continued Colonel Cameron, “ to weary your

patience with more details. You may conceive the nature of our parting, and the feelings with which, on the following morning, I left the house of Don Pedro. 'The anguish of my mind was somewhat alleviated, however, by the fact, which I had drawn from Don Pedro, that the seducer of his sister was Colonel Atkinson. You know him ; one of the most distinguished of our cavalry officers ; but a man notorious for his gallantries and libertine principles. A ray of hope fell upon the future ; and I resolved, as soon as I had seen my mother and arranged my affairs, to seek Atkinson throughout the world, and to wipe off the stain which he had inflicted on the family of my Rosalba, or to fall in the attempt."

How singular, thought I—for I purposely refrained from mentioning the circumstance to Cameron—how singular that I should have witnessed the death of this unfortunate lady ; and that the individual, whom my friend now sought to call to an account for his libertinism, was the husband of the unfortunate being whom he had rescued from the *Serpentine*, and in whose fate he had felt so deeply interested. The circumstances which threw Atkinson and Cameron together—namely, their services in the Peninsula—had prevented me from informing

him that Atkinson was the man whose cruel conduct had driven that unfortunate woman to desperation ; and now, by the most singular coincidence—the inscrutable ways of Providence—he was about to inflict upon him that chastisement for another delinquency, which he would long before have attempted, had he been aware that he was the author of the wrongs of that unhappy woman.

Cameron had not yet informed me that he had met with Atkinson ; but I suspected it, from the singularly gay spirits which my friend now assumed, the peculiar curl of his lip, and the expression of triumph in his eye, the well-known harbinger of some exulting communication which he was about to make. I could almost read his thoughts ; his looks were like the light ripple on the wave before a storm—certain indications of a coming change of doubtful issue. How singularly do men deceive themselves on such occasions ! they appear to tempt fate : calculating with certainty on the penalty of the event for which the satisfaction is demanded being paid by their opponents : overlooking altogether the probability of the blow alighting upon themselves.

CHAPTER X.

Laertes. ————— in my terms of honor
I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation.

HAMLET.

“THERE are some injuries which can only be settled by a duel.” So says the world ; that is, the fashionable portion of the west end of the town, if we live in that part of the metropolis ; or some three dozen of families, if our lot of life be cast amongst the county aristocracy. I shall not stop to enquire what these injuries are ; and I will admit that the feelings of a man may be wounded in the tenderest point ; that all which has shed happiness upon his path of life may be for ever destroyed by the act of another ; and that, as there are no other means of remedying the evil in the present state of society, a man is naturally tempted to redress himself. But there is one absurd ingredient essential to this mode of redressing an insult—the placing the offending party, who is to expiate his guilt, in such a

situation that the punishment is as likely to fall upon the individual who is injured as upon himself. But admitting, with Dr. Paley, who makes the foregoing remark, that the offender is sure to suffer, I would again enquire, in his words, “in what the satisfaction consists?—or how it tends to undo the injury, or to afford a compensation for the damage already sustained?” This is undoubtedly the only rational mode of viewing the question. Nevertheless, it may be demanded, is a man to suffer patiently under the yoke of insult,—to be shunned by his equals, and pointed at as a coward by the world? Undoubtedly not, I reply: without a fair reputation, this world is a scene of disgust, and life is a loathsome burthen. But will a duel, even when the offender falls, heal the wound inflicted on the affections of an injured husband?—will it restore peace of mind to a family whose sister has been ruined?—will it justify a base imputation, which has been propagated by scandal?—or, will the satisfaction which is demanded, and which is given by a duel, lighten the guilt of the adulterer or the seducer? Certainly not. In what, then, does the beneficial influence of duelling consist? It may be replied, that it prevents the frequency of insult; preserves

the decorum of society ; and mitigates the pain of an injury by the sweetness of revenge.

So far as the prevention of insult and the preservation of the decorum of society are concerned, I fear duelling has done little : few men wantonly insult others ; and, when an aggression of this description is the consequence of unrestrained temper, the dread of a duel never occurs to the mind of a passionate man. In those cases, again, where the injury has been of a nature to intrude upon the peace and happiness of a family, neither the termination of a duel in the death of the offender, nor any apology which he may be compelled to make on the ground, if he live, can restore that peace which his misconduct has wrested from it.

The modern duel is a relic of the joust to the utterance of chivalric times. Although one or other of the combatants was doomed to die, yet the joust to the utterance was often undertaken on the most frivolous pretences ; it was frequently a vain display of prowess. A modern duel is as often a more silly conceit of being fashionably notorious. The duellist yields to what is termed the law of honor,—a law existing only for a certain part of society, and the essence of which is extreme revenge.

The idea that the dread of a duel tends to

preserve the decorum of society, is to suppose that the majority of mankind are cowards, and politeness and civility unnatural habits, and that the fetters of fear are necessary to chain down the natural evil dispositions of our race.

In the days of chivalry, when love and war were the business of life ; when the blood of the noble ones of the earth was supposed to differ from that of the ignoble : when kingdoms were considered as mere chess-boards, and their subjects regarded as the instruments of the game, played by the few gifted with divine authority ; when even the awards of justice were settled by the sword ; when every moral duty was discharged by the chance of battle, and the voice of conscience stifled in the loud peals of triumph, as the successful combatant set his heel on the neck of his prostrate foe, and received the award of his prowess, accompanied with the approving smile of his “ ladye love :” then it was not wonderful that reputation, merited or unmerited, should be maintained by an appeal to arms. But disrobe chivalry of its equipments, its golden spurs, its nodding plumes, its emblazoned shields, its silken pennons streaming on the wind, its glittering armour, and the scarf thrown over it by the hand of beauty :—remove the gorgeous

ornaments of the lists, the array of heraldic insignia, the bright eyes which gaze upon the combat to adjudge the meed of victory ;—the floating harmony of martial music, mixed with the brazen notes of trumpets, and the shouts of excited spectators ;—what is it ?—what, but a scene of authorized murder and of brutal triumph !

Happily, the sun of Christianity has arisen upon the benighted world, and shed the light of its benign influence far and wide ; for, although, by the wiles of a crafty priesthood, chivalry was the offspring of a union between religion and arms :

“ The fine vocation of the sword and lance,
With the gross aim and body-bending toil
Of a poor brotherhood, who walk the earth,
Pitied ;* ”

Yet a different sentiment now influences mankind ; and the triumph of war is the peace and repose of the world.

To the last argument in favor of duelling—namely, that consolation is derived from revenge, by one smarting under the sting of an injury—it may be replied, that, although the natural feeling of all animals, from the worm up to man, is to repel injury for injury ; and

* Wordsworth.

although it is almost as natural to foster that spirit which glories in the humiliation of an adversary; yet, by the influence of religion, this truth has been gradually forcing itself upon the minds of men—that “the forgiveness of others is the condition upon which alone we are to expect, or even ask, from God forgiveness for ourselves:”—a doctrine calculated to diffuse goodwill, peace, and love, among the human race,—to smooth the rugged paths of life, and to shed over them the beams of felicity.

On these premises, there can be little hesitation in pronouncing that the practice of duelling is detrimental to sound morality; involving two crimes—namely, suicide and murder; and only justifiable by the respect paid by a certain portion of mankind to the “unauthorized laws of honor,” which “create exceptions to divine prohibitions.”

Such are my ideas of duelling: they are given devoid of any consideration for the opinions of society, or, as it is termed, the world, to which our judgment is too frequently narrowed, and our ideas of good limited.

But, my friend having been nearly all his life in the army, and being educated to respect the refinements connected with points of honor, on

which military men pride themselves, these were not likely to be his opinions. His affections, besides, were involved in his pledge to seek out Atkinson, and to inflict vengeance upon him for the wrongs done to the family of his Rosalba.

Although gentle as a child, yet Cameron was high-minded, valiant, and imbued with all the pride of feudal times. With as much romance as ever warmed the bosom of the most ardent knight, the object of his affection was truly the idol of his heart; his confidence in her love was unbounded; his own constancy was also that of another age; Rosalba was ever present to his imagination—she was the only sun of his world. His idea of love, indeed, was that of Sir Gruélan:—

“ The pure influence of immortal mind ;
Chaste union of two hearts, by virtue wrought,
Where each seems either in word, deed, and thought ;
Each singly to itself no more remains,
But one will guides, one common soul sustains*.”

Its dominion over him was absolute; the inclination of the object of the sentiment was his law. It is not wonderful, therefore, that, with such intenseness of feeling, and such elevated

* The Lay of Sir Gruélan.

generosity of soul, my friend should adopt, as his own, the quarrel of the family of Saldanho. No knight ever perilled himself with more delight, in the cause of woman, than my friend Cameron in that which he had undertaken. His homage was not so much to the beauty as to the virtues of his love : her image was ever blended, in his fancy, with the purity of heaven ; and to efface any stain upon it he regarded as a duty, hallowed by the cause. Such were the sentiments of my friend :—but it is time to terminate this digression, and to proceed with his narrative.

“ I did not become acquainted with the death of my poor mother,” continued Cameron, “ until I returned to England ; and, having arranged my affairs, the loneliness of my home would have soon driven me from Perthshire, had I not accidentally learned that Atkinson was in the West Highland. I sought for him eagerly in every part of my native country, not excepting its most solitary wildnesses, but without success. I resolved, therefore, to return to England ; and, as I was setting out from Edinburgh, information reached me that he was in London, having run away with the niece of a military officer, who, with his friends, was travelling in the Highlands.”

I smiled, and, to the amazement of my friend, related to him all that I knew of that transaction.

“ Well,” continued he, “ you will soon find him ; for I encountered him yesterday in a coffee-house. He informed me that he was under a bond to keep the peace in England, having challenged an officer who had insulted him ; but that he was going to Ghent, and would meet me there. He admitted the injury which he had inflicted on the Saldanho family ; an act of his life of which, he affirmed, he had most sincerely repented ; and that, although, as an officer and a gentleman, he could not refuse to meet me, yet he never would return my fire.”

“ Under such circumstances, how will you proceed ?” enquired I. “ The extraordinary vow of Senora Saldanho, and your pledge to accomplish its object, place you in a most awkward position. If you shoot Atkinson, after he affirms that he will not return your fire, you will place yourself in the situation of a murderer : if he do not fall, your pledge to Senora Rosalba will be unredeemed.”

Cameron was struck with the remark, and remained for a few minutes in thought.

“ I cannot now resolve the difficulty,” said

he ; “ but proceed I must to Ghent. I have an engagement at two o’clock ; and, as the time approaches, I must say good bye.”

We both rose ; and, having left his lodgings together, and walked as far as Cavendish Square, we shook hands and parted.

I found Oatlands at the Clarendon, and communicated to him the information which I had just received. We agreed to go to Lady Mary’s party, to which we had been invited, and, on our return, to communicate with Mordaunt, and take measures for our immediate departure for the continent.

“ How the plot of our adventure deepens !” said the Advocate.—“ I have the warmest regard for Mr. Mordaunt, and feel an unaccountable interest in the pursuit we are engaged in ; but I fear it will end tragically. Well, we must be prepared to face it. Shall we meet at dinner ? Adieu !”

He left the hotel, humming the Scotch air,

“ There’s naught but care on every hand.”

’Tis too true : if our bosoms are free from its corrosion on our own account, we take into it the misery of others. What difference does it make ?—None.

CHAPTER X.

“ Oh, will this state of tossing agony
 No termination have? Send out, I pray thee,
 Another messenger.”

JOHANNA BAILLIE.

IT was one of those cool, clear, autumnal mornings, which are truly invigorating; the sky was cloudless; and the sun just sufficiently high to silver the gothic pinnacles and decaying towers of the ancient city of Bruges; when an English party issued from the Hotel du Commerce, and, traversing the now almost desolate streets of that once celebrated, rich, populous, and powerful capital, embarked in the treck-schuyt on the grand canal for Ghent. The party consisted of the Veteran and Mrs. Standard, Aunt Bridget and Miss Standard, Mordaunt, Oatlands, and myself.

Mordaunt had been disappointed in his endeavours to find out the lodgings of Atkinson;

and still more so, in not meeting the Colonel and his daughter at Lady Mary's party. The depression of spirits into which he was thrown, by these events, rendered him truly an object of pity. He felt, as he afterwards informed me, as if an unrelenting fate was undermining the citadel of his feelings ; he shuddered in thinking that he had almost lost his reliance upon that overruling Providence which had hitherto supported him ; and he became reserved and irritable. The eagerness of Miss Standard to alleviate his suffering, and her unremitting attentions with this view, were the only circumstances which could draw from him any expression of satisfaction, or lighten up his countenance with a transitory smile. She had reached London, with her family, on the evening of Lady Mary's party ; and, as we determined to proceed to Ghent on the following morning, the family of the Veteran embarked with us in the steamer for Ostend : we had arrived at Bruges on the evening of the day before that on which our re-embarkation in the treckschuyt for Ghent took place.

The boat was crowded, and presented specimens of all nations and characters. Beneath the awning on the deck, besides our own party, were Italians, French, Germans, Flemish, and

several groups of English ; the latter displaying, as usual, that exclusiveness which is the most striking national feature in the habits of our countrymen abroad. Among other characters, in this motley assemblage, were three Béguines, whose placidness of manner and singularity of dress strongly arrested the attention of the Advocate, who had never before met with any of these devout women. One of them spoke English fluently, and readily entered into conversation with Mr. Oatlands.

“ I believe,” said he, after having made several enquiries respecting the order, “ that there was a Protestant Nunnery at Gedding, in Huntingdonshire, in the time of Charles the First, whose rules closely resembled those of the Sisters of St. Béghé: they were even at liberty to leave the institution, if they were inclined to marry.”

“ That society,” replied the Béguine, “ was more rigid, in many respects, than ours: like them, however, we observe a middle course between the monastic and the secular condition: we have rules for our government both in and out of the Béguinage; but we are bound by no vows; and many of us are supported from our own funds.”

“ Do you frequently travel?” continued

the Advocate, who seemed desirous to draw forth the observations of the holy woman upon secular matters.

“ There are few places in Holland, Germany, or France, besides Belgium,” replied she, “ that I have not visited. Our order neither enchains the mind nor the body : the more we can observe human character, in all its varieties, the more likely are we to be fitted for administering to the comfort of the distressed : and that is one of the objects of our institution, without reference to country or religion.”

“ A noble object !” rejoined Mr. Oatlands. “ In your travels,” continued he, “ had you time to turn your attention to works of art ? What is your opinion of the comparative value of the galleries of Antwerp and the Hague ?”

“ They do not admit of comparison,” said she, her face brightening up as she spoke, and its look of austerity completely vanishing. “ The Antwerp gallery contains a few of the finest paintings of the Flemish school, and one which I may venture to assert is unequalled in the world. I refer to the portrait of the Burgomaster Nicolas Rockox, by Reubens. The colouring is that of life : the head speaks ; and the hands are not less expressive of vitality

than the countenance. Painting could proceed no farther ; it is the glory and triumph of the art : indeed, Reubens seems to have been inspired in working upon that picture ; for its companion, the portrait of Adriana Perez, the wife of the Burgomaster, is inferior to it in many degrees. In the gallery at the Hague, however, every picture is the first of its class. What do you think of the Madonna, with the infant Jesus, among the specimens of the Spanish school ?”

“ It is,” replied Oatlands, “ in my opinion, the finest picture in the collection. What an air of melancholy sweetness is breathed over the countenance of the mother !”

“ And the Bull of Paul Potter ?” continued the Béguine, smiling as she put the question.

“ The sign of the Red Cow !” replied the Advocate : “ it is, in my opinion, inferior to his smaller pictures. The mere portrait of a young bull, as large as life, has no interest ; whereas the grouping of his cattle, and the accompaniments, in his smaller pieces, constitute the great merit of Potter’s works. I prefer the little piece in which a cow is represented admiring her shadow in the water, to the larger picture, much as it is celebrated.”

The Béguine nodded her assent, and smiled.

I was forcibly struck with the expression of her countenance at this moment. It reminded me of that of Mrs. Standard in her better days ; but the beauty which still beamed through features beginning to display traces of advancing age, and which evidently had been altered by anxiety and care, if not by sorrow, was of a higher description than that lady's had ever been. Mrs. Standard at this moment came forward : the Béguine gazed intensely in her countenance for a few seconds, and then, remarking that a bell, which was ringing, was the announcement of dinner at the table d'hôte, she and her companions descended into the cabin.

“ That is a remarkable woman,” said the Advocate ; “ I shall endeavour to gain her name, and to meet her again at Ghent.”

“ She has been beautiful,” remarked Mrs. Standard ; “ but the expression of suffering, so strongly depicted on her countenance, tells at once the cause of her entering into the religious order to which she belongs.”

Mordaunt sat apart on the side of the gay treckschuyt, as it glided between the high banks which bound the canal on its approach to the city of Ghent. The light discourse of the passengers ; the notes of the guitar, accompanied by the full, mellow voice of an Italian gentle-

man, who was politely amusing the voyagers under the canopy; even the loud laugh of a group of young Irishmen, who had found the table d'hôte excellent, and the wines generous; were incapable of rousing the Clergyman from his melancholy feelings. He spoke to nobody; and, indeed, his depression seemed to gain a firmer influence over him as he approached the spot where it was likely his anticipations would be confirmed or refuted, his felicity or his misery sealed. His memory recalled a long succession of events, which, although veiled like a

Dim and shadowy vision of the past,
Seen far remote, as country which hath left
The traveller's speedy step,

preyed upon his spirits, and threw a kind of hopeless obscurity over the future. Miss Standard approached him, and endeavoured to divert his attention, by directing it to the few objects which the confined borders of the canal presented:—the rows of abels, the purple spiked loosestrife, the flowering rush, and the gay shrubs embellishing the banks on each side;—the water lily, opening her spotless blossoms to the noonday beam, whilst the wave, dashed from the prow of the boat, curled up or bathed her broad green leaves, floating like a mantle

on the surface of the water. He smiled, and turned his eye to the objects ; but, immediately afterwards, again sunk into his reverie.

As we approached the ancient capital of Flanders, and the banks between which the *treckschuyt* proceeded had become so elevated as to shut out every object not in the line of the canal, Oatlands was amusing Mrs. Standard and Aunt Bridget by an imaginary description of the surrounding scenery, when a vista of the tower and the steeples of the city was brought into view by a turning of the canal, and excited general attention. The three *Béguines*, who, like the rest of the Belgians, had remained after dinner in the cabin, came upon deck ; and the one who spoke English, on overhearing the satirical description of Oatlands, ventured to offer a few remarks in support of the beauty of the country, which she supposed he was vilifying.

“ You are mistaken, sir,” said she, “ respecting the country round Ghent. It is not a district of romantic glens and rugged mountains, like Scotland, of which I presume, from your accent, you are a native : but it is rich in cultivation, well wooded, displays features of the most tranquil prosperity, and possesses many picturesque scenes, notwithstanding its flatness. The fertility of the soil is equalled

only by the industry of the peasants who cultivate it, and who are not only contented, but placed far above that penury which is so conspicuous in many other countries. Of its wealth in horticultural productions you will be able to judge for yourself, if you shall visit the green and fruit market during your sojournment in our ancient city."

Besides the correctness of the remarks, there was something in the delivery of them, and in the manner of the Béguine, that again forcibly arrested the attention of the Advocate; and which induced him to explain to her that his remarks were merely playful, and intended solely to amuse, and fill up the time whilst passing so slowly between the high banks of the canal, where there was little to interest the eye.

"My friend, Mrs. Standard," continued he, "requires my sportive nonsense to rouse her spirits."

The Advocate had scarcely pronounced the name, ere the Béguine started and turned pale: but, immediately regaining her self-possession, she drew her white coif, which she had unfolded and was wearing in the manner of a hood, more closely round her face, and fixed her eyes steadfastly upon Mrs. Standard.

“ And Madame,” said the holy sister, “ is she also from your beautiful land of romance ?”

“ No,” replied Oatlands ; “ romance can scarcely be said to have yet reached the extended prairies of her native soil.”

The Béguine became again pale as death, staggered, and would have fallen, had she not sunk upon one of the benches behind her. Oatlands sprung to her assistance.

“ You are ill, I fear, ma mere,” said he ; whilst Mrs. Standard presented to her a vinegarette.

“ *Quelque peu des vertiges, Monsieur,*” she replied ; and immediately added—“ but they will pass away.”

Her hand shook as it held the vinegarette ; and a minute elapsed before she was able to raise it to her nostrils. She kissed the box on returning it to Mrs. Standard ; drew closer her coif, sighed, and sat for some minutes silent, with her eyes fixed upon the deck. Aunt Bridget, Mrs. Standard, and Oatlands, exchanged looks, which seemed to say—“ what can this mean ?” None of them had seen any member of the order of St. Béghé before ; and they were at a loss to divine why the holy sister should be so much agitated without any evident cause. Mrs. Standard, now, introduced her

daughter to the Béguine, who took her hand, gazed earnestly in her face, then gently kissed her forehead, and requested her to sit on the bench beside her.

“ If you have not visited Ghent before,” said she, addressing Miss Standard, and still retaining her hand, “ you will be amused with the antiquity of the city, which was originally the capital of the Pays Bas ; our narrow streets, our bridges and canals, will interest you. Mademoiselle must see our belfry, the cathedral, and the gallery of Monsieur Scamp.”

“ May I enquire,” said Miss Standard, “ whether you are a native of Ghent ? Your English is not that of a Foreigner.”

“ I am not a Gantois,” replied the Béguine, sighing deeply, and looking intensely in the face of her auditor ; “ but I am a Béguine. You must, *ma chere !* visit the *grand Béguinage*. The order of St. Béghé is not a cloistered order, a closet nunnery ; it consists of various grades of sisters. I am one of those who are permitted to wear the habit, without actually being under the strict rules of the Béguinage : my life is spent in works of charity, in visiting and administering consolation to the sick, and in prayer.”

“ It is an arduous, but praiseworthy course

of life," said Miss Standard; "but," continued she, "not one which many young persons are likely to adopt."

"*Pardon, Mademoiselle!*—in the Beguinage you will find women of every age, cheerful and happy."

"Do they never repent the course of life which they have chosen?" enquired, again, Miss Standard.

"I cannot venture to answer that natural question," replied the Béguine. "The younger sisters affirm that they do not: the elder speak enthusiastically of the consolations which they experience. The occupations of the younger sisters often divert their attention from corrodings still rankling in the bosom: the duties of the elder prevent them from dwelling upon unpleasant retrospects. The religious labours of both, if regarded as acts of penitence to atone for the frailties and imperfections of our nature, afford, in the Christian graces which the obligations of our order impose, the comfort which is promised to the penitent—'the quiet of contentedness, the rest of peacefulness, and the blessed sweetness of spirit that is in meekness and humility*.' You must visit me at the Béguinage, and judge for yourself."

* Jeremy Taylor.

“ For whom shall we enquire ?” said Miss Standard.

The Béguine hesitated for a few moments ; a cloud of sad recollection seemed to pass over her ; and a tear stood in her eye.

“ I am known,” she then replied, “ as *La Sœur Patience* ; but, my dear young lady, that is not my real name.” On saying which, she sat silent for a few minutes ; then, gently pressing the hand of Miss Standard, she rose hastily, and entered the cabin.

“ There must be something singular in the history of that woman,” said Miss Standard, addressing her mother.

“ She is evidently a gentlewoman,” rejoined Mrs. Standard ; “ her manner, her conversation, equally betoken superior intellect and breeding. We may, perhaps, learn something of her history when we visit the Béguinage.”

As this conversation was proceeding, the vessel reached the point of its destination ; and, having exhibited their passports, and run the gauntlet of the porters, the clamorous puffers of the various hotels, and the trucks which are always waiting the arrival of the treckschuyt, the party entered the ancient capital of Belgium. The narrow streets ; the antique and grotesque architecture of the houses, their high

gable ends rising like steps; the canals and their numerous bridges; particularly attracted the attention of Oatlands, who put a thousand questions to a young Gantois, who had offered his services as a guide to conduct the party to the Hotel Royal, in the Place d'Armes; the porch of which we entered just as the dinner bell was summoning the inmates to the table d'hôte.

Every Englishman, who visits Belgium for the first time, should be informed that, if he wish to fare well, he must dine at the table d'hôte. No private dinner, however excellent the hotel may be in other respects, will satisfy our countrymen. The Flemish are pieces of clock-work; every transaction for the day is arranged in the morning, and timed; and nothing that has not been anticipated is welcome, even when profitable: therefore, nothing out of the usual way is ever well done.

The Veteran, who was an experienced traveller, and was fully aware of this, consequently hurried the toilettes of the ladies, and ushered the whole party into the *salon à manger* before the soup had disappeared.

Among the individuals seated at the table were two Belgian officers, who soon entered

into conversation with the gentlemen of our party, and displayed all that polite attention to the ladies which so peculiarly characterizes well-bred military men. One of them, a fat, rubicund-faced, handsome man, with moustaches, which Aunt Bridget pronounced to be the only truly becoming appendages of the kind which she had yet seen disfiguring the human face, directed his discourse chiefly to Miss Standard, and described the objects most worthy of the attention of the traveller. As he was speaking, the hour was struck by a very loud and deep-toned bell, and immediately followed by the air of Malbrook, chimed from some tower or steeple.

“ These chimes,” said the *Gros Capitaine*, an appellation bestowed by Miss Standard, in defect of the real name of the handsome Belgian, “ are in the belfry tower. You must ascend it, *Mademoiselle*, to-morrow : it is upwards of six hundred years old, and commands a most interesting view. You can form no idea of Ghent, unless you see it from the belfry tower.”

“ Are there any remains of Philip van Artevelde in Ghent ?” enquired Miss Standard.

“ Several,” replied the *Gros Capitaine* :

“ the gilt dragon on the top of the belfry was one of his trophies at the capture of Bruges, under Baldwin, Count of Flanders.”

“ It was from that tower,” said Oatlands, “ that Charles the Fifth, punning upon the name of the city, asked Alva—‘ Combien il falloit des peaux d’Espagne pour faire ce Gant ? ’ ”

“ Oui, Monsieur, c’est vrai ; it is an old story.”

“ Are there many English at present in Ghent ? ” asked Mr. Mordaunt, who had scarcely before raised his eyes.

“ No, not many—very few,” replied the handsome officer.

“ Do you know if a Colonel Atkinson be here ? ” continued Mr. Mordaunt.

The two Belgian officers looked at each other, repeating the name At—kin—son, slowly, as if to recollect ; after which the *Gros Capitaine* replied that he had heard the name, but he did not know the Colonel. A gleam of satisfaction beamed on the countenance of Mordaunt : he looked at Oatlands, but remained silent.

“ Where is the Grand Béguinage ? ” said Mrs. Standard, addressing the Belgian officer.

“ Not half an hour’s walk from the hotel,

Madame. Would you like to go to vespers there this evening? I shall be proud to conduct your party. The assemblage of the sisters in the church is an interesting sight."

The proposition was immediately accepted; and at seven o'clock we entered the walls of the little town which constitutes that singular nunnery.

The first object of the ladies was to enquire for Sister Patience. They soon found out her habitation; on the door of which was the name of *St. Ursula**; but the Sister was not at home. Their curiosity, however, was gratified by a view of the house. The kitchen and refectory, in particular, interested them. In the latter, the ascetic habits of the sisters were strikingly illustrated: each sister cooks her own food; and the arrangements of the refectory were such, that, although many dine in the same apartment, yet each dines alone. The room was furnished with a number of small buffets, in the shelves of which were arranged plates, cups, and various articles for cooking; and, below each buffet, was a board which drew out to form a table, at which the owner of it dines, with her back turned upon her neighbours.

* On the doors are inscribed, not the name of the tenant of the house, but of some saint, its supposed protectress.

On leaving the lodging of Sister Patience, it was curious to observe the nuns crowding to the church, each walking alone, disregarding the others, and apparently unconscious of their presence. As they crossed the area between their lodging houses and the church, their white veils were carried upon their heads, folded up in a square form, like a napkin; but, on arriving at the porch of the church, they were unfolded, and then formed into a kind of hood, which almost concealed the face.

The whole of the sisters, amounting to more than six hundred, were seated, and the chanting of the vespers had commenced, before we entered the church. We were disappointed, however, in finding that the chanting was confined to two or three voices in the organ gallery. The obscurity of the church—for the day was rapidly closing in, and the only lights were the candles on the altar, — the black dresses of the sisterhood, contrasted with their white veils, and the various attitudes of devotion which they individually assumed, impressed a deep interest on the scene.

The nuns occupied the whole of the centre of the church, except a few who separated themselves from the main body, and approached to the altar, around which the strangers were

seated. Amongst the Béguines near the altar, I thought that I recognized Sister Patience ; but the hooded veil so concealed her face, that there was no opportunity of verifying my conjecture. I perceived, however, that she whom I suspected to be our late fellow traveller eyed the party with most intense interest ; and, until the *salvé* was sung, her devotions seemed to occupy little of her thoughts. As soon as the service ended, I crossed the platform with the intention of addressing her ; but she had already vanished among the crowd of the retiring sisters. The ladies again enquired after her at her lodgings : she was not there ; and why she should thus shun the interview, which she had solicited, I could not explain.

We returned to our hotel, much pleased with the ceremony, although Oatlands and Miss Standard were equally disappointed in not meeting with Sister Patience. *Le Gros Capitaine*, however, in our walk home, entertained us with many anecdotes of the sisterhood and their good works.

On retiring to my room, I could not avoid reflecting on the singular position in which matters now stood. It was almost certain that Atkinson was in Ghent, and it was very probable that Cameron was also there. That a

duel would take place, there could be little doubt : it was also probable that any interposition of mine, with a view to hinder it, would prove ineffectual. I turned the subject, however, over in my mind ; and I resolved to find out Cameron, and to accompany him to the field. My object was, if possible, to prevent either party from firing ; but the difficulties which presented themselves were almost insurmountable ; they crowded round me like those in a voyage of discovery, when rocks and shallows appear on every quarter, and when the course must be kept against opposing winds and currents, with no land-marks to steer by, or to lessen the peril. What was to be done ? The reply was a problem, which I could not solve : after pondering upon it to no purpose, I went to bed, and dreamt of a shipwreck.

CHAPTER XI.

“ Man’s angry heart, inspected, would be found
 As rightly set as are the starry spheres ;
 ’Tis Nature’s structure, broke by stubborn will,
 Breed all that uncelestial discord there.”

YOUNG.

I CANNOT guess how the case stood in Judea ; but in Belgium the assertion of the Rabbins, that woman took nine of the ten measures of garrulity which were sent down to mortals, is completely disproved. There the donation is at least equally divided between the sexes : our new acquaintance, *le gros Capitaine*, was a demonstration of the accuracy of my opinion.

“ He is a most agreeable man,” said Miss Standard, after our return from the Grand Béguinage ; “ but he talks so rapidly, and so incessantly, that I could not get in a word.”

As I was descending to breakfast, I encountered him upon the stairs, returning from

parade, in full uniform ; his comely person set off to the best advantage.

“ *Bon jour, Monsieur !*” said he : “ how are the ladies ? I hope you have slept well ? Can I be of any service to the party to-day ? Apropos ! I have heard that Colonel Atkinson is at the Hotel des Postes. I shall be happy to conduct you there, after I have disencumbered myself of these trappings, and have taken a cup of coffee : *le veux tu bien, Monsieur ?* I shall be ready at half-past nine.”

As he was obliged to pause for my reply, I repeated “ half-past nine,” accompanying the words with a nod of assent ; and then, darting down stairs, entered the *salle-à-manger*. The Veteran and the ladies were already there, and breakfast was on the table. In a few minutes afterwards, our handsome Belgian also was seated near us, with his roll and his cotelet before him ; and he continued talking fluently during the whole of breakfast time, between each sip of his *café-au-lait*.

Mordaunt had not yet appeared ; and, as I was anxious to have an interview with Atkinson before the discovery of his residence should be made known to our friend, the minutes seemed to pass tardily until *le gros Capitaine* finished his repast. I then ventured to remind

him of his promise to conduct me to the Hotel des Postes.

“ *C'est pour moi un grand plaisir,*” replied he, rising ; and, most goodnatureedly drawing my arm within his, we walked out. Our inquiries at the hotel confirmed the Captain's information that Atkinson was residing there ; but we were told that he had gone out at seven o'clock that morning. I asked if Miss Atkinson was at home ?

“ She went out, only five minutes since, with *la Sœur Patience*, a Bégueine,” replied the waiter.

“ *La Sœur Patience ?*” said I, as if uncertain of the name.

“ Yes, sir,” rejoined the waiter ; “ the pious Sister was sent by the Colonel to shew the young lady some of the sights of the city.”

“ It is a custom,” interposed *le Capitaine*, “ when young ladies visit Ghent, if their fathers or brothers be occupied with business, to procure one of these devout ladies to chaperon them in their walks through the city.”

“ It is a singular coincidence, however,” thought I, “ that Sister Patience, whom we had met in the treckschuyt, should be selected for this purpose.” I could not help considering it as one of those destinations of Providence

which occasionally occur for good, when mortal efforts prove abortive. I remained, however, silent, although a thousand conjectures passed through my mind as we retraced our steps across the Kauter; and I scarcely heard the remark made by my voluble companion on the *tristesse* of Monsieur le Curé, as he styled Mordaunt; and the advantage of a trace of melancholy in the clerical countenance.

On entering our hotel, we found the whole party equipped for a visit to the cathedral and the belfry; and as I was still anxious that Mordaunt should remain ignorant of the information which I had obtained respecting Atkinson, I was not sorry to find that some private business would prevent *le Capitaine* from being our cicerone on this occasion.

Ghent may be regarded as the Manchester of Belgium, and although the number of persons employed in the cotton manufactories is still considerable, yet the streets present much of the same deserted aspect as those of Bruges. I was amused with the parallel, drawn by the Advocate, between the fantastic gable ends, the height of the houses, and the narrow streets and passages, and those of the old town of Edinburgh: but he was forced to admit the superiority of the Belgic city in the number

and the beauty of the scrolls and ornaments which decorate the buildings.

The cathedral of St. Bevan, into which we soon entered, is not only the most ancient, but the richest in point of decoration, of all the sacred edifices of Belgium. The high altar, with the statue of St. Bevan, carved by Verbruggen, arrested the attention of the whole party, on entering the church ; whilst the fact of the candlesticks having belonged to Charles the First, and having been sold during Cromwell's protectorate, did not escape the Advocate ; who took an opportunity of descanting on the meanness of republicanism to Mrs. Standard. The Sacristan, who conducted us through the church, pointed out the arms of England which still remain upon these candlesticks.

Mordaunt paid little attention to the numerous monuments, the pictures, and the other works of art, which surrounded us on every side.

We had paused before the celebrated production of Henry and John Van Eyck, which is more spoken of by travellers than actually prized for its merits—a singular circumstance, if we consider the period at which it was painted, and its intrinsic value as a work of art.

“It is true,” said Oatlands, whose taste was critically correct, “as Joshua Reynolds remarked, that the figures are painted in a hard manner, and the perspective is defective ; still the execution is of a character worthy of the immortality to which it is undoubtedly destined.”

Whilst the Advocate was uttering this opinion of the merits of this celebrated painting, I had turned round to ask the Sacristan a question respecting it, when my attention was attracted by a kneeling Monk, whose beautiful head and countenance presented a study fitted for Van Dyke, or for Rubens. His face was pale ; but the features were exquisitely moulded, and strongly expressive of superior intellect, as well as that earnest contemplation which bespeaks the soul completely withdrawn from the world, and elevated far above the vanities and transitory enjoyments of this life. Not a muscle moved ; the eye was bent upon a figure of our Saviour with a fervent intensity, and the hands were crossed upon the breast : it was, in truth, a breathing personification of the most abstract devotion.

A young lady and a Béguine, upon whose arm she was leaning, were regarding the kneeling Monk with an interest equal to that which riveted my attention ; but I was so absorbed

in the Monk that I scarcely looked at them. They moved onwards at the moment that Mordaunt and Oatlands had turned round, at my solicitation, to look at the Monk. The eye of Mordaunt, however, was not directed to the Monk; it followed the females as they passed down the long aisle, whilst his colour alternately came and went.

“It must be!” said he, thinking aloud; and, then, turning to me, he remarked, that if he could judge of any one by figure and gait, independent of face, he was certain that the young lady was Caroline Atkinson: yet, with this impression on his mind, he stood as if rooted to the ground. With more self-possession, Oatlands walked rapidly after the parties; and in a few seconds we all followed. The two ladies had, however, issued from the porch of the cathedral; and before Oatlands reached the street, not a vestige of them was perceptible.

The information which I had received at the Hotel des Postes left no doubt on my mind of the truth of Mordaunt’s conjecture: but I was not sorry that it could not be generally confirmed at this moment. The agitation which this disappointment produced on him may be readily conceived: he looked truly wretched

and ill; and, as he proposed returning to the hotel, I determined to accompany him, and to leave the rest of the party to finish their inspection of St. Bevan's, and to ascend the Belfry.

As we were crossing the Kauter, I perceived *le Capitaine* standing in the porch of the hotel. He soon saw and walked towards us.

"I have just heard," said he, "that Colonel Atkinson has fought a duel this morning with another Englishman of the name of Cameron, and that he is mortally wounded."

Mordaunt looked at me, and then eagerly enquired whether the Captain had heard where Colonel Atkinson lived, and whether he had a daughter with him. I interrupted him, and stated that I already knew all these particulars; and proposed that we should immediately proceed to the Hotel des Postes.

The crowd in the street indicated that something uncommon had occurred; and we learned that the wounded gentleman had been carried into the house not a quarter of an hour before our arrival. On entering the hotel, the landlord informed us that the municipal authorities were there; and, that his orders were to admit no stranger to the apartment of Colonel Atkinson. It was in vain that Mordaunt urged our

admission, and that I stated my acquaintance with the Colonel ; the landlord was firm to his trust ; and we were on the point of retiring, when I thought it probable that we might procure some information through Cameron, if he was still in Ghent. I enquired, therefore, if the master of the hotel knew where that gentleman resided.

“ He lives here,” was the reply ; “ and he is now in Colonel Atkinson’s apartments.”

“ Send to him,” said I, “ this card ; and let him be informed that I am here.”

The landlord hesitated for an instant, then took the card up stairs. In two minutes he returned and ushered us into the room. Cameron met us at the door.

“ This is, indeed, Doctor,” said he, taking my hand, “ a most providential visit ! I was thinking of you at the moment that your card was presented, and wishing that I could convey you here ; for I have no opinion of Belgian surgeons, and I fear this unfortunate case will require all the skill and attention that can be bestowed upon it.”

I gazed steadfastly in my friend’s face for a few seconds without speaking. He quickly read in my look what was passing in my mind.

“ I perceive,” continued he, “ that you are

reflecting upon the singular incongruity that a man will not hesitate to attempt the life of another, and yet, immediately afterwards, he shall be the most anxious to save it. But do not prejudice me ; the blow by which Atkinson fell was not given by my hand."

Mordaunt, the eager expression of his countenance indicating the intensity of his curiosity and desire to hear what had occurred, now exclaimed—

"What then has happened?"

"Walk to the other end of the room," said Cameron, "and I will tell you the whole affair. Those gentlemen, who are seated at that table, are the municipal authorities ; the two friends who went out with us are detailing to them the circumstances which took place."

There was a calm, collected manner in my friend, which, coupled with his assertion that the blow was not given by him, puzzled me. We walked to the further end of the room, and, being seated, Cameron delivered the following narrative of the unfortunate event.

"I was in Ghent two days before Colonel Atkinson, who, on his arrival, took apartments in this hotel, where I already had fixed myself ; so that we met before he had been three hours in the place. He mentioned to me that he

expected an old brother officer to act as his friend ; but, as he had not arrived, he anticipated no objection on my part to postpone our meeting for eight and forty hours. I assented ; and, last night, I received a note, stating that, as his friend had not yet arrived, he had met with a Belgian officer who had kindly agreed to accompany him ; so that, not to keep me longer in suspense, he should fix our meeting for this morning. In a postscript to his note, he added,—‘ I have one favor to ask ; and, from my knowledge of your character, I feel secure of your acquiescence : it is to solicit your friend Major Stevenson, should I fall, to convey my poor daughter to England, and to place her under the protection of her uncle, Colonel Standard, who is now most probably in Edinburgh.’

“ Doctor !” said Cameron—his voice faltering as he spoke,—“ I know that you will not deem it affectation in me, when I assure you that this postscript completely unnerved me. I had seen Miss Atkinson : her beauty, the gentleness and the modesty of her demeanour, which shed an additional grace over her loveliness, and a trace of melancholy visible through all her efforts to please and to amuse her father, had deeply interested me : these qualities, you

know, are the certain means of reaching the heart. Her father, indeed, seemed to doat upon her. Need I say that the idea that she might be rendered an unprotected orphan by my hand, sent a pang to my bosom which no language can describe. I cursed the hour which gave birth to the rash vow that bound me ; and I inwardly prayed that the chance of the first fire might fall to Atkinson, and that I should have no power of returning it."

Mordaunt looked in the face of Cameron, whilst his moistened eye eloquently spoke the sentiments that were passing in his mind ;—and he pressed the hand of the generous soldier.

" You may readily conceive," continued Cameron, " the kind of night which I passed ; and also the feelings with which I left the hotel this morning. I was on the field at seven o'clock : Atkinson was also punctual to his time. Before measuring the ground, my friend, Major Stevenson, assured him that his wishes with respect to Miss Atkinson should be faithfully fulfilled. In thanking him, the resolution of Atkinson for a moment gave way ; but he immediately recovered his firmness, and requested the seconds to perform their duty. I thanked Providence, on being informed that the lots had decided the first fire to belong to

my opponent ; although I need not inform you that my thoughts, at that instant, were fixed upon the only being for whom I now regarded life worth possessing.

“ I waited to receive the fire of my opponent. Instead of firing, he regarded me steadfastly for a few minutes : he then advanced towards me, with his pistol reverted ; but, his foot tripping against a stone, the trigger, in his attempt to recover himself, was touched, and the ball instantly lodged in his breast. He fell, and we all ran to his assistance. He lay for a moment, stunned, and the blood oozing from the wound : but, rapidly recovering his presence of mind, he stretched out his hand towards me, and, with the utmost composure and firmness of voice, said—

“ ‘ It is well, Colonel Cameron !—it is the just retribution of Heaven !—it is right that this hand should be the engine of my merited punishment. I can only hope for mercy from ——.’

“ He hesitated, and, without finishing the sentence, closed his eyes, whilst a tremor shook his whole frame. We all thought him to be dying ; but, on raising his head, and supporting his shoulders on my knee, he revived. We expressed our hopes that the wound was not

mortal. He looked at the Surgeon, who had accompanied him to the field, and who was then examining where the ball had entered.

“ ‘ I perceive,’ rejoined he, ‘ my fate is sealed ; the countenance of my friend speaks the sentence. It only remains, Colonel Stevenson, again to solicit your kind attention to—my—’

“ His utterance once more failed : he seemed suffocated ; then was slightly convulsed ; and at length fainted. We concluded he was dead ; and, on consultation, it was agreed that we should remove the body into the Béguinage, which was close by, until such time as his daughter could be apprized of the event. The sisters readily admitted it ; and a mattress was brought into the refectory of the nearest lodging, upon which it was laid. To our astonishment, however, life was not extinct ; he once more opened his eyes, and, seeing three of the Béguines in the room, enquired where he was. On hearing him speak, one of these pious ladies approached close to the mattress, knelt down upon one knee, and, gazing steadfastly in his face, seemed much affected. She soon, however, rose ; and, addressing me, asked his name, and put a thousand questions regarding the unfortunate circumstances which had brought him there, and the causes of the

meeting. I replied as brielly as I could to her queries ; and, taking advantage of the sympathy which she displayed, I endeavoured to engage her to proceed to the hotel, in order to break the event to Miss Atkinson.

“ ‘ Is his daughter in Ghent ? ’ said she, putting an emphasis on the word daughter : and, as she spoke, she laid hold of my arm to support her from falling : the good lady’s feelings, indeed, were evidently completely overpowered on hearing that he had a daughter.

“ ‘ I will instantly go,’ continued she ; ‘ it is a melancholy duty which must be performed. I shall endeavour to take her out, until the wounded gentleman is lodged in the hotel. Let me beseech you, sir, not to move him too soon : sister Ursula will furnish you with every thing requisite for his comfort.’

“ She turned from me, and again gazed for a minute upon the face of Atkinson. There was so much sympathy in her look, that I expected to see the tears start into her eyes : indeed, it seemed to require a powerful struggle to repress her feelings ; and, for a moment, the issue seemed uncertain ; her powers of self-control, however, triumphed, and she hastily left the room.

“ Two hours nearly elapsed before means could be obtained to convey our unfortunate

charge to the Hotel. We were pleased to find, on our arrival, that Miss Atkinson was from home, the holy sister having succeeded in taking her out; and ten minutes have not elapsed since they returned. How the poor young lady has supported the appalling sight of her dying parent I have yet to learn: she and the kind-hearted Béguine are, at this moment, in the sick room."

Cameron had scarcely concluded his narrative when he was summoned to add his attestation to the deposition of the seconds. The attention of Mordaunt had been chained during the whole of the recital: he now raised his eyes, and, expressing his amazement at the circumstance which had so providentially rescued Cameron from the execution of his rash vow, he asked what was to be done? and whether, in his clerical capacity, I was of opinion that he could afford any consolation to the dying man?

"There can be no doubt," replied I, "that you may afford much comfort to poor Atkinson."

"Such is also my opinion," rejoined he; "the greatest libertine—the most wilfully blind, the most callous in vice, on whom no reformation can be wrought in health, and during the fulness of prosperity—is often brought into the

most opposite train of mind when death stares him in the face : the proud are then humbled ; the sceptic is convinced ; and every man feels, at that moment, that the finger of God has traced the law of conscience on his heart too indelibly to be effaced."

" But, my dear sir," added I, " you must meet Miss Atkinson before you can enter the room of her father."

" Undoubtedly," was his reply : " the only difficulty is, how to accomplish it."

I was resolving in my mind in what manner to proceed, when the Béguine entered the room. I was pleased to find that she was indeed *la sœur Patience*. The pious lady recognized us ; and, advancing, addressed Mor-daunt—

" You are come, sir," said she, " most opportunely ; our poor patient has expressed an ardent desire to see a clergyman of the Protestant faith : I have only left the room to send for one ; but, as I believe that you are a minister of that persuasion, may I solicit your assistance for him. I will lead you to the room."

" I had already thought," replied he, " to offer my services ; but it is essential that Miss Atkinson should be previously aware of my being here."

The Béguine eyed him from head to foot : it was one of those looks which speak volumes, although nothing is said. She concluded, however, her inspection with the single word—
“ Certainly.”

As she was leaving the room, I drew her aside and explained, as briefly as possible, the position in which Mr. Mordaunt and Miss Atkinson were placed towards one another. She expressed some surprise, but said little ; and promised to return after she had notified our being in the house to Miss Atkinson. In a few minutes she opened the door ; and, beckoning to us to follow, conducted us to the sick room.

In our way, she informed me that she could not prevail on Miss Atkinson to leave her father's room ; but, from what she had seen of the young lady, she thought that she had strength of mind to sustain the meeting, without displaying that agitation which might alarm and distress her parent.

“ He already knows,” she continued, “ who Mr. Mordaunt is, and her sentiments respecting him : and he knows that he is here.”

The first thing which attracted my attention, in the dim light of the sick room, was the changed aspect of Atkinson. When I last saw him, in the

Peninsula, his cheek displayed the full flush of health ; his handsome figure—muscular, vigorous, and manly in its proportions, seemed capable of any exertion, whilst the beams of intelligence, which lighted up his countenance, demonstrated powers of mind equal to his physical energies. His figure, stretched on the bed, was now pale and emaciated, and bore evident traces of long corroding anxiety : it was plain that he was suffering as keenly in mind as in body, although his natural courage still struggled to repress the expression of both states of feeling. His daughter was kneeling at the side of the bed, embracing his right arm, which was stretched towards her, with her forehead resting upon it : whilst the Béguine, who had hurried to the opposite side of the bed, supported the head of the patient, to relieve his breathing, now oppressed almost to suffocation.

“ Doctor,” said he, whilst his hand was extended to take mine, and a transitory smile played around his lips, “ it is indeed kind of you to visit me : but my case is beyond your skill.”

He paused ; for even this short remark seemed to exhaust him. I placed my finger on his pulse ; it was quick, weak, and fluttering ; his efforts at relief by inspiration seemed

almost fruitless ; and, after a short cough, his head fell back upon the arm of the Béguine, who fanned him with her handkerchief. As he recovered, his eye lighted upon Mordaunt, who had advanced to the side of the bed, close to Miss Atkinson ; and then turned upon his daughter.

“ Caroline, my dear !” he feebly articulated, “ here is Mr. Mordaunt.”

The wretched girl raised her face, with a wild delirious gaze, towards her father for a few moments ; then, without turning her eye upon her lover, she again buried it in the bed clothes.

“ Mr. Mordaunt,” continued he, “ your presence has taken a load from my bosom : the severest pang which I have suffered has arisen from the idea of leaving my poor Caroline in the hands of strangers : but now—”

He paused from exhaustion ; and, although the Béguine moistened his lips with some wine, yet several minutes elapsed before he could proceed.

“ Mr. Mordaunt,” he continued, “ I know my daughter’s heart ; I entrust it to your affection ; you cannot too much prize the gift.”

The Clergyman, who was powerfully affected, bent his head, and applied his lips to the cold hand which was extended to him. Miss

Atkinson, whose look, when she before raised her face towards her father, expressed that peculiar character of delirium which indicates absolute despair and utter wretchedness, now sobbed aloud.

The unexpected approbation of her expiring parent to that union on which she rested her future hope of happiness, caused a transition of feeling, from the most poignant, overwhelming grief, to the tenderness of filial gratitude. The withering influence of the former had seared her heart to the core: its sensibility was awakened anew by the softening touch of the latter, and the feelings of the woman again flowed in their natural channel. After giving vent, for a few minutes, to a flood of tears, she seemed at once to have regained all her self-possession. She rose from her knees—gave her hand to Mr. Mor-daunt, and eagerly beseeched him to bestow that religious comfort upon her parent which his condition so imperiously demanded.

“ I am certain,” continued she, looking at the Béguine, “ that our kind-hearted and pious Nurse and Sister will not object to the predilection which we have for our own form of prayer.”

The Béguine bent her head in silent ac-

quiescence; but, after regarding the lovely girl, who had thus addressed her, for a few seconds, with a look of almost maternal tenderness—

“The heart,” said she, “unsophisticated by the errors of false philosophy, knows no form in addressing its Maker:—enlightened and purified by the beams of Christianity, and relying on the assurance which the atonement has afforded that its sincere aspirations shall reach the throne of the Eternal himself, the fountain of boundless benevolence and mercy, it matters little through what creed the supplications are made.

There was too much liberal feeling in this remark to admit of any dissent, even from Mr. Mordaunt; and it seemed to convey a ray of comfort to the dying sufferer, which the expression of his countenance clearly indicated. He clasped his hands together, and placed himself in a position to listen to the service for the visitation of the sick, which was now read in a subdued, yet solemn, tone of voice.

I was much struck with the mild, yet dignified, aspect of Mr. Mordaunt, as he earnestly pronounced the truths which this service contains. When he came to that emphatic passage, “I require you to examine yourself, and your state

both towards God and man," he paused, and directed his eye, with a steadfast but benignant look, upon the wretched man, whose countenance had become deadly pale, and tremulously convulsed; his arms had dropped by his side, a cold perspiration stood upon his forehead, and a suppressed groan of agonized thought burst from his bosom.

The Béguine, who had hitherto remained devoutly upon her knees, raised her head as the pause occurred. On perceiving the death-like aspect of the countenance of Atkinson, she uttered a shriek, rose from her position, and, with an agitation the most remarkable, enquired — "Is he then gone?"

I assured her that he had merely fainted.

"Thank God!" she then exclaimed; and, crossing herself, hastened to sprinkle his face with water, and to adopt those means of recovery which are well known to these pious women: but her whole procedure displayed an earnestness and an anxiety which seemed singular, and far beyond that which mere sympathy might have called forth.

Miss Atkinson, whose attention was also roused by the pause in the reading of Mr. Mordaunt, grasped her father's hand, and cast the most imploring look of inquiry, first at Mr.

Mordaunt, and then at me. I placed my finger, again, upon the pulse, and was about to assure her that the fit would pass away, when Atkinson heaved a deep sigh, and, slightly waving his hand, said, in a feeble voice, "proceed."

The service was scarcely concluded, ere the door opened and the Veteran entered the room. On perceiving him, Miss Atkinson rushed towards the old man and clung around his neck, whilst he fondly strained her to his bosom.

"I have taken the privilege of a connection, Colonel Atkinson," said he, "to enter your room, to offer my services in any way in which they can be useful."

The wretched man extended his hand, whilst a momentary gleam of satisfaction lighted up his countenance.

"You are, indeed, most welcome, Colonel Standard!" replied he; "we ought long since to have met: it would, indeed, have prevented many erroneous impressions from having been formed, and it would also have averted much anxiety from both of us. But Providence has now guided you here to receive again the guardianship of my daughter, to whom you have acted more like a father than an uncle."

He laboured for breath as he spoke : it was evident, indeed, that his strength was rapidly failing : he, however, after a few minutes' pause, continued—

“ I have only known enough of her to appreciate justly her value. She has a tender and a dutiful heart ; her gratitude to you is unbounded. If—” he panted as he exerted himself to speak—“ if chance should throw her much-injured mother in your way”—here his voice faltered, and a shudder passed over his whole frame—“ tell her that my dying hour was one of deep repentance—and—that it held forth the faint hope of her forgiveness.”

The Béguine, who had drawn her coif close around her face when Colonel Standard entered the room, and who was listening with the most intense interest to the few sentences which Atkinson had just concluded, became hysterically agitated. Throwing off her veil—

“ I can no longer——” she exclaimed ;—“ hear — hear that forgiveness — pronounced from my own lips—I forgive you, Richard !—my heart is still yours—it has never swerved from that affection which first made it yours.”

As she spoke, the dying man seemed to acquire new life and strength : he raised himself in bed—shrouded his eyes, which were start-

ing from their sockets, with his hand, as if to aid his recognition of the face of the being who thus addressed him. For a moment, they sparkled with a preternatural brilliancy ;—he stretched out his arms—he struggled for utterance : it was in vain ;—he tossed about in fruitless anguish—at length, Nature, exhausted with the effort, gave way—a choking sound gurgled in his throat—then came the hissing of the last respiratory effort—a convulsive struggle followed—his features were horribly distorted—and he sunk back lifeless upon the pillow. The piercing shriek which the Béguine uttered cannot be described. With her eyes riveted upon the features of the dead man, she stood for a few moments petrified ; and then, as if struck with lightning, fell upon the bosom of the corpse.

The paralysing influence of the unexpected discovery of her mother in the person of the Béguine, added to the shock of the immediate death of her father, proved almost fatal to the delicate frame of Miss Atkinson. Her knees gave way under her, and she would have sunk upon the floor, had she not been supported by Mr. Mordaunt, who, raising her in his arms, conveyed her into the adjoining room. I followed him ; and, after giving some directions

for her recovery and comfort, returned again to the apartment of the dead.

The scene presented a moral and religious lesson never to be forgotten. The Béguine still lay, in the same cataleptic state, across the lifeless body of her husband—the mortal and now senseless tenement of a noble spirit. How shall we speak of it?—Whence had it fled?

As a soldier, Atkinson had displayed the most exalted virtues—valiant, firm, honorable, humane: but as a man, both his religion and his morality were defective. Had it been otherwise, he might have been refreshed by hope; and, if not blameless, he might at least have been cheered by the consciousness of rectitude of intention, at the awful moment which had just elapsed. Alas! on the contrary, tainted by the depravities of the world, he had departed overwhelmed with humiliation, mortification, and despair. But, *Requiescat in pace!* We know that we shall all be summoned, at the twinkling of an eye, to the last tribunal: there, to him as well as to ourselves, whilst the sentence will be rigidly just, we believe that it will also be tempered with mercy.

The Editor has to state that his friend had not attempted to describe the meeting of the sisters, nor that of the mother and daughter. His Diary contains the history of the Béguine, which may some day be laid before the world. In a subsequent part of his Diary, the Editor finds the following paragraph.

“ I arrived this evening at Lonsdale Rectory. The worthy Rector saw me trotting up the avenue, and came himself to the door to welcome me. On entering the drawing room, I was delighted to see so many of my old friends. The Veteran, lounging in an arm chair, was teaching the manual exercise to a curly-headed urchin about three years old, who was standing between his knees, shouldering a cane ; Mrs. Standard and Mrs. Atkinson were seated on the sofa, the latter in her widow's garb, still looking like the Béguine, although no longer bigoted to that faith to which she had fled for consolation in her domestic affliction. She was conversing with Aunt Bridget, whose identical fan was still flirted in the old way ; whilst Miss Standard was performing the duties of the tea table. Mrs. Mordaunt, as lovely as ever, met me at the door ; and the salutations of all came directly from the heart.

“ ‘ Have you heard any thing of your friend Cameron ?’ said the Veteran.

“ ‘ I had a note from him the day on which I left home,’ said I, “ announcing his arrival in Perthshire, with his wife and his brother-in-law.’

“ ‘ And have you seen,’ said Aunt Bridget, ‘ my admirer, the Advocate ?’

“ ‘ I dined with him, at Oatlands,’ replied I, ‘ a week since ; and met there the Artist and the Cantab. I never passed a more delightful day : our landlord was in high spirits ; his bosom overflowing with philanthropy. He is projecting what he calls a jubilee, which is to bring us all together among the hills for a week.’

“ ‘ What does the dear man propose to do ?’ said Aunt Bridget.

“ ‘ Why, Biddy ! it is a scheme,’ replied the Veteran, ‘ to grind old ladies young again ! ’ ”

THE END.

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